

This copy has been provided by the UBC Archives [or UBC Rare Books and Special Collections] and is to be used solely for research or private study.

THE EFFECT OF THE WAR ON ORIENTAL MINORITIES IN
CANADA

BY

H. F. ANGUS

Reprinted from the Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science,
Vol. 7, No. 4, November, 1941

This copy is to be used solely for research or
private study and any use of the copy for a purpose
other than research or private study may require the
authorization of the copyright owner of the work.

THE presence in Canada of substantial minorities of Oriental race interests us both as citizens and as social scientists. Even those who believe that the task of good citizenship has been made harder by immigration from Asia must recognize that the interest of Canada to the social scientist has been enhanced.

The racial minorities are three in number and are very unequal in importance. There are about 25,000 persons of Japanese race in Canada, of whom 23,000 live in the province of British Columbia.¹ The Chinese are somewhat more numerous in Canada, although there are only 21,769 in British Columbia.² There are very few East Indians and it is significant that the Special Committee on Orientals in British Columbia which reported in December, 1940, treated "Orientals" and "Persons of Japanese and Chinese racial origins" as interchangeable terms.

The figures cited concern race (as determined by paternal descent) and do not indicate nationality or culture. Of the 23,000 persons of Japanese race in Canada approximately 2,400 are naturalized Canadians, and 13,400 Canadians by birth. This leaves an alien group of 7,200 but it must not be overlooked that many of those who are Canadians by birth may claim Japanese nationality by descent, or may have Japanese nationality imposed upon them because their parents have registered their births at the consulates. It is probable that almost all the Canadian-born are more Canadian than Japanese in culture, and this is true of some of the immigrants from Japan who entered Canada at early ages. Not many Chinese are Canadian either by birth or naturalization. For the former the figure is 900, for the latter 200.³ Of the East Indians probably none are aliens.

The higher rate of naturalization among the Japanese is in part accounted for by their wish to engage in occupations, such as fishing, for which British nationality is essential, and in part by the existence of a community of men, women, and children which considers Canada as its permanent home. The Chinese figures present a contrast. The Chinese had no great economic incentive to naturalize, and the low number of Canadian-born Chinese is a natural consequence of the Canadian legislation which, prior to the exclusion of Chinese immigrants in 1923,

*This paper was read at the round table on Sociology at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association in Kingston, May 24, 1941.
¹*Report of the Special Committee on Orientals in British Columbia* (Ottawa, 1940), p. 8.
²*Ibid.*, p. 9.
³*Ibid.*, p. 9.

imposed a head tax high enough to discourage the entry of Chinese women. The Parliament of Canada, in its wisdom, has thus brought about the naturalization of a large number of Japanese and has prevented the Chinese from becoming a permanent racial minority of substantial size. But the ultimate simplification of the sociological problems of racial relations which Parliament has secured by fiscal ingenuity has not been without its price, for neither the Canadian Criminal Code nor the ethics of Confucius has been adequate to make good the exclusion of "God's policemen."

While it is hardly necessary to warn members of this Association not to confuse race, nationality, and culture, we must remember that in the popular mind no such distinctions are drawn and that the whole population of Oriental race is popularly considered alien in the fullest sense of the word. This popular view assumes (i) that the Canadian law concerning nationality does not really express the will of the Canadian people, and that it is not morally binding on them; and (ii) that the fact of Japanese, Chinese, or East Indian descent on the paternal side is an insurmountable barrier to cultural assimilation. Grotesque as these assumptions seem, when they are put in black and white, it is very easy to make them vaguely and almost unconsciously. They can be explained psychologically even if they are without any rational basis.

The only Oriental minority which will be important during the next few generations is the Japanese. Its permanent nucleus consists of the Canadian-born who comprise 6,900 males and 6,500 females, in comparison with 500 males and 400 females of Chinese race and a negligible number of East Indians. The Japanese group alone has been substantially reinforced by immigration during the last ten years, during which period 1,120 entered Canada.

The economic position of Orientals in British Columbia has, during the first generation, resulted in part from the natural aptitudes of the immigrants and in part from the obstacles which have been placed in the way of their using these aptitudes either by the wisdom of the Legislature or by popular custom. In the later generations education can be planned to take account of the obstacles. The upshot is that, while you will look in vain in British Columbia for Japanese lawyers, pharmacists, accountants, teachers, policemen, or civil servants, you will find substantial numbers engaged in fishing, logging, and farming. Roughly speaking, the colour bar, both in law and custom, is evidence of the economic protectionism of the non-Oriental population rather than of any *bona fide* distrust of Japanese competence. As is usual in a protectionist environment, each economic group desirous of excluding competitors concentrates on its own immediate interests. Very little

copy is to be used solely for research or private study may not be reproduced without the copyright owner's permission.

thought is given to the general interests of the community, and it is tacitly assumed that these interests are the sum of the interests of each group so that an advantage for one need not be purchased by a disadvantage to another. The shelter which each group can secure is the measure of its political and social influence. Of course, self-interest is always rationalized. Each group discovers that its particular mystery requires basic intellectual or moral qualities denied by nature to persons of Japanese race in the paternal line and incapable of detection by any objective test or examination.

This type of argument has the disadvantage of running counter to the main tendencies of British and American political tradition, Christian ideology, and the main currents of modern scientific thought. This imposing trinity has a very low political potential. Even in alliance these three moral forces would find it hard to resist the mechanized fury of immediate material self-interest; and an alliance between them is as difficult to establish as one between the immediate and the ultimate victims of political aggression.

The political position of the Orientals in British Columbia is a survival of a period when reasonable distrust was felt as to the ability of recently naturalized members of a society very different from our own to play a useful part in our democracy. The denial of the suffrage in British Columbia, and in federal elections in British Columbia, may be considered as the Canadian counterpart of the United States denial of naturalization. But our legislation extends to subsequent generations, born and educated in Canada, and at this point has no parallel in the United States. The vote has been conceded to Japanese soldiers who fought in the Canadian forces during the Great War, but the privilege does not descend to their children. The outbreak of a new war, therefore, excited hopes and fears among those interested in the political future of the Japanese minority. However, the war which broke out in 1939 was not of such a character that a whole generation of Japanese Canadians might demonstrate its loyalty on the battlefield and return decimated and purified by the ordeal of battle to receive full Canadian citizenship as the reward for its devotion to the cause of democracy. Not only was it the wrong sort of war for this purpose, but it broke out in very complicated circumstances.

For a year and more before the crisis in Europe, the Japanese community in British Columbia had, by disseminating propaganda favourable to the Japanese view of the China incident, impaired its standing with those circles most disposed to press its cause. Its action is not hard to explain. A migrant group is not likely to be a harsh critic of its parent community, and it is naturally anxious to improve the relations

between that community and the land of its adoption. A group, accused to listen to the voice of authority, is likely to believe that its country, or its mother country, is always right. No one likes to realize that he will be forced to elect between two competing loyalties. But Canadian sympathies lay in the main with China. They were not strong enough to inspire a demand that Parliament modify the Chinese Immigration Act so as to accord to the Chinese the privileges which had been extended to the Japanese, but they did lead to a demand that similar legislation should be enacted against Japan. But, in the autumn of 1939, the Japanese government had not recovered from the shock of the pact between the U.S.S.R. and Germany. It shared in the general uncertainty as to whether the anti-Comintern had been dissolved or Stalin had joined it. The Japanese in British Columbia were disturbed by a situation very different from that of 1914. They began to see that they might have to decide where their political loyalties lay. When I was asked to speak to a group of younger Japanese in September, 1939, I told them frankly that this was a decision which they might have to make. The only advice that I added was to be honest with themselves and honest with others.

It needs but little imagination to see that the decision would be difficult and painful. In the present war national allegiance is not the only allegiance binding on the conscience and honour of man, and patriotism is not the supreme virtue. But even the relatively simple problem of choosing between the ancestral and the adopted country is painful enough. There is nothing in Japanese tradition to weaken either loyalty, except perhaps the doctrine of the age of chivalry that, if need be, a man must show himself worthy of his real father by fighting against him in the cause of his adopted father. But Canadian culture knows little or nothing of the age of chivalry and the tendency in recent years has been to infuse into Canadian education a good measure of international pacifism. Could the issue be carried beyond the bounds of national loyalty and could the Canadian-born Japanese be asked to express a preference between the New Order sponsored by Japan and her associates, and the New Order vaguely foreshadowed by the Anglo-American democracies? Could men, denied the vote in Canada, be seriously asked to decide a question which we should hesitate to propound to the Canadian electorate? Could men, denied the vote on the score of race, be asked to fight for the cause of democracy? Might they, with propriety, wait and see whether their fellow citizens' enthusiasms for democracy would lead them to make a conscientious gesture within their own country? Or might they find the essence of the matter in those

basic rights of the individual which do receive more respect in Canada than in the Axis states or in Japan? At this meeting I thought of these questions, but I did not ask them, nor did anyone put them to me. One question, however, I did have to face. What, it was asked, was the duty of a man who had tried to enlist but had been rejected on the ground of race? Should he feel that the rejection terminated his moral liabilities as a citizen? I replied quite frankly that, as long as racial prejudice and distrust existed as a fact, or were supposed to exist, no one in his senses would do anything which might impair the cohesion of an army. I added that patience and dignity in the face of an undeserved humiliation might well bring their own reward and that after the war it would be hard not to recognize that an immediate offer of service, followed by loyal and patient acquiescence in exclusion from it, were as good a qualification for the franchise as enlistment in the second, third, or fourth year of a war.

With this meeting of September, 1939, as a background, I have followed the subsequent developments with interest. A large number of *nisei*, or second generation Japanese, have become acutely conscious that to rank as Canadians they must be ready and willing, if need arise, to fight against Japan. They have watched for every sign of friendship or hostility which Canadians of other races may make. Happily the time for deliberation has been prolonged and a large part of it elapsed before the fall of France and the clear definition of Japanese policy which followed. During this interval the attitude of the second generation Japanese in the United States has become fairly clear and has exerted its influence on the smaller community of Japanese in Canada. The policy of the United States in drafting men of all races has also had its effect.

The interval has also allowed Canadian policy to take shape. There was, at first, no clear-cut Canadian war-time policy toward minorities of Oriental race. East of the Rockies, they were accepted in the armed forces; in British Columbia there was *de facto* exclusion, except in the universities where all races were admitted to the Officers' Training Corps, and all races required to undergo basic training. The opposition to enlisting Orientals was based in part on the doctrine that "if a man is good enough to fight, he is good enough to vote," which was cunningly converted into its ignoble inverse, "if we do not allow a man to fight we are under no obligation to allow him to vote, whatever may be his achievement in other directions."

When Canada adopted conscription for home defence in June, 1940, there was nothing in the legislation to exclude Orientals from its scope.

This tacit recognition of equal citizenship delighted them, and they had the added satisfaction of being called up for medical examination. But their summons for training was deferred. It was in these circumstances that the Cabinet War Committee appointed, on October 1, 1940, a Special Committee to investigate the situation of "persons of Japanese and Chinese racial origin who are resident of British Columbia." The examination of this Committee were extended two days later to include functions of "the general problem of Japanese and Chinese in British Columbia from the point of view of internal security and with particular reference to military training." This reference brings into the general picture a possibility with which we have not yet dealt. It would not be inconceivable that some incident in the Far East might excite a wave of popular resentment which would express itself in demonstrations against Japanese citizens in Canada, and even against Canadian citizens of Japanese race. The Special Committee reported on December 2, 1940, and we may conveniently pause here to view the situation through its eyes.

The Committee dismissed the problem of the Chinese as relatively unimportant. As we have seen, most of the Chinese are nationals of a country with which our relations are at present good. Of the 700 males of British nationality a good proportion would be excluded by age alone from the category of potential soldiers, for many of the 200 naturalized Chinese are in the higher age groups and many of the 500 Canadian-born are still children.

In considering the Japanese the Committee dealt with evidence of hostile feeling between them and the white population, with its causes, with its bearing on internal security and national defence, with the possibility of diminishing any hostility that might exist, and with the desirability of precautionary measures. The Committee found as a fact that there existed "a greater or less degree of suspicion of the Japanese as a people and a feeling that their racial solidarity was likely in an emergency to override their loyalty to Canada and produce subversive or otherwise dangerous activities." It also reported that no concrete evidence had been adduced in justification of this sentiment and that charges against individual Japanese or groups of Japanese proved in every instance upon further examination to arise from unsubstantiated rumour and hearsay." Of course the fact that distrust and dislike are rationalized on grounds that will not bear scrutiny cannot be taken to mean that there are not genuine causes, as well as spurious ones, for these unpleasant sentiments. Almost every witness before the Committee expressed the opinion that the chief cause of dislike was economic. And the Committee came to the conclusion that distrust and dislike

attack might appear to be justified by some act of aggression by Japanese against British or American citizens in the Far East. It is with the best ways and means of forestalling any violence by whites against Japanese that the main body of the Committee's recommendations is concerned.

The principal recommendation was that all Japanese in British Columbia should be registered and given registration cards. The object of this registration was to give a quietus to the persistent allegations that there are in British Columbia large numbers of Japanese who have entered illegally. The registration would test this opinion and would lead to the ejection of any who might have entered illegally. For the future, possession of a registration card, bearing on it conclusive evidence of identification, would be proof of legal entry. It was further recommended that the leaders of the Japanese should be told how much the position of the whole racial minority might be prejudiced by a single act of violence or wrongdoing, and that their aid should thus be enlisted in preserving order.

As regards the military problem the Committee took the view that it would be better, at least for the present, not to give military training to the Japanese or to enlist them generally in the armed forces of Canada. This recommendation does not affect what is already being done in the universities. It was not unanimous and it was based on a wish to protect Japanese of military age against unpleasant incidents which might arise between them and other Canadian soldiers, if Japan were to come into conflict with the British Empire. Some of the witnesses had gone much further and were offended by the idea of white and Japanese youths being together in camp or barracks (as of course they are in the United States). One further item deserves mention. The Committee noted that the provincial Department of Education was to assume supervision over foreign language schools, including those conducted among the Japanese. The charge against these schools has been that, in addition to imparting instruction in the Japanese language, they inculcate the doctrines of Japanese nationalism. To a certain extent this charge has been admitted and the text-books have been revised.

A small standing Committee, of which the writer is a member, has been set up to supervise the carrying out of such of the recommendations of the Special Committee as have been adopted, or may be adopted, by the government of Canada. And under the supervision of this Committee registration has been proceeding during the past few weeks. At this point it may be of interest to enumerate several indications of popular opinion. The mouthpiece of the *nisei*, or Canadian-born Japanese (including those educated, though not born, in Canada) is the *New*

would not persist in times of normal economic activity and relatively full employment, unless they were kept alive and stimulated by other agencies. To be precise they accused persons (whom they did not name) of being animated by "a desire for personal political advantage." This conclusion should be of great interest to the Canadian Political Science Association, for the desire for personal political advantage (spoken of in somewhat disparaging terms) is first cousin to the celebrated profit-motive and is as much the mainspring of political democracy as the profit-motive is of the capitalist economy. If either of these main-springs goes wrong then the system which depends on it for its normal operation is in great danger. We must not be surprised, therefore, when we find the Committee saying that "the suppression of public state-ments arousing antagonism against the Japanese in British Columbia should be an integral part of plans for civil security and national defence." The Committee went on to suggest that "popular fears would be greatly allayed by an official statement that the Government is satisfied that adequate precautions have been taken and will be continued against any dangerous elements in British Columbia."

But the Committee did not limit itself to recommending the suppression of unsuitable words and the utterance of suitable ones. It considered that something might be done to deal with the question of "unfair competition" by insisting on the enforcement of existing legislation and enacting new legislation designed to ensure minimum living standards. At the same time it recognized that the best way to raise living standards is to raise incomes and that (by implication) the most effective way of lowering them is to make it hard to earn a living and to drive Japanese from one occupation to another. Just as it has been necessary to explain the "distrust and dislike" among the whites, so it was necessary to explain why the Japanese had not been more vocal in protesting against discriminations. Two explanations were suggested: first, that the Japanese were better off than they would have been in Japan; second, that they are "a traditionally disciplined and obedient people, accustomed to thinking in terms of the interest of their community as a whole, so that any tendency toward imprudent action can be readily held in check by the leaders of their several groups."

In addition to the economic factor the Committee recognized racial prejudice as an important cause of dislike and distrust, and this feeling has been intensified by national resentment against Japan. And thus, although it is the Japanese in British Columbia rather than the whites who are the victims of discrimination, all the witnesses examined by the Committee, with one exception, agreed that the immediate danger of violence lay in the possibility of an attack upon the Japanese. Such an

tarian ground that attendance at a second school imposes an intolerable nervous strain on immature youths.

Throughout this controversy the temper of the Canadian press has, on the whole, been admirable, and has been greatly appreciated by the Japanese. There has been, in general, an opinion that further migration from Japan should be entirely stopped. There has been dislike of double nationality. But the view that Canadians of Japanese race should not be denied political and economic equality has been widely supported. Intemperate attacks on Japanese have closed their columns to those who wish mean that the newspapers have been employed while white men, or white men of special categories, such as discharged soldiers, are without jobs, or to those who have ingenious suggestions for burdens to be borne by Japanese in substitution for the military service which has been denied them. The Japanese, in turn, have been irreproachable in subscribing to war charities and in buying war savings certificates. In the recent drive the leaders of the community began by paying 25 per cent over their quota, and then set about collecting the money. This adopted this technique.

I have tried to give in broad outlines a picture of the Japanese racial minority in British Columbia today. Many details have, of necessity, been omitted. It remains to suggest a few conclusions.

We must be on our guard not to judge the behaviour of either Oriental or non-Oriental Canadians by high or exacting standards. We are dealing with ordinary men and women. If, in fairness to white Canadians, we remember that we are considering the treatment of a minority of alien race, which has been the object of traditional antipathy on economic grounds, and which is closely identified in the popular mind with the country of its racial origin—a country with which Canada is on the verge of war—we must conclude that the treatment of Japanese Canadians has been as good as could reasonably be expected.

The political disabilities of the Japanese Canadians will disappear with time. The province of British Columbia cannot stand out indefinitely against the force of British tradition and North American practice. Once the presence of a Canadian Japanese group as a permanent part of the population is accepted as inevitable and all hope of killing, sterilizing, or deporting is abandoned, the impossibility of keeping a racial minority in an inferior political position will become more and more apparent. Most of the legal economic barriers are more intractable and infinitely the franchise. But the *de facto* barriers are more intractable and infinitely

more than the mere language may be taught in them, to take the humani-

attack on Japanese language schools abandons the safe ground that discussions. And the objection must logically go as far as this, when the have to use if they do return, is one of the many inconsistencies in current the same time, object to their learning the language which they will perhaps as an expert in some field. That those who advocate the com- pulsory return to Japan of all or most Japanese Canadians should, at fluently. It is also not impossible that he may wish to return to Japan, business entirely with Japanese, many of whom do not speak English he may be compelled by his *de facto* exclusion from many careers to do severe handicap for a Japanese Canadian not to know Japanese, because by action of their own. The case for the schools is that it may be a very should supplement the action of the provincial Department of Education language schools, raising the question whether the local authorities There has been a sharper divergence of opinion about the Japanese press.

no support within the Council and nothing but condemnation from the Japanese, as a class, were unfair competitors for white men. He received granting certain trade licences to Japanese on the ground that the One member of the City Council of Vancouver took objection to supported their fellow citizens of Chinese race.

But the abstract issue was widely discussed and the *wise* naturally say what it would, or would not, have done if its powers had been wider. Council was advised that it had no legal power to intervene and did not the likelihood of their property depreciating in dollar value. The City a passport and based their case not on their own race prejudice, but on because a young married couple of Chinese race had bought a house in their street. They were not prepared to accept university diplomas as ink. Not so long ago some property owners in Vancouver protested This is, of course, not the only issue which has led to the spilling of unworthy motives.

able opinions but also a propensity to attack one's fellow citizens from "Once a Jap-baiter, always a Jap-baiter," implying not merely unalter- citizen, but insolent if Canadian journalists of Japanese race retort, race on the father's side can become a wholly trustworthy Canadian Jap, always a Jap," with the sinister innuendo that no one of Japanese raised is whether it is open to a Member of Parliament to say "Once a tion, and replies to any charges levelled against it. The sort of issue war effort in every way. It also airs the grievances of the second genera- lication is intensely patriotic and urges its readers to support Canada's Canadian, "The voice of the second generation." In tone this weekly pub-

more serious. These barriers have a concealed social cost. As long as a *de facto* colour bar excludes the *élite* of the Japanese Canadians from occupations for which they are fully qualified by ability and by education, this group will become more and more discontented and embittered. They will have to accept inferior jobs and inferior incomes. Every phrase about democracy, about equality of opportunity, and about tolerance will sound to them like hypocritical mockery. And, as they are the natural leaders of the Japanese minority, their outlook will colour and dominate that of the whole community.

If, therefore, it were possible to practise a little political jiu-jitsu, acting at the point at which the smallest amount of force can produce the greatest possible result, we should concern ourselves with the fortunes of this small group of ten or twelve men and women a year. We should endeavour to see that they find occupational opportunities roughly comparable with those of Canadians of other races. We should convince them, by deeds and not by words, that Canada will give them a square deal. But concealed social costs are often costs which people do not want to see, rather than costs which they cannot see. When Chinese women were excluded by heavy taxation, no estimate was made, so far as I know, either of the number of white girls whose ruin was the natural and probable consequence of this exclusion, or of the crime and delinquency which were likely to accompany it. The same thing seems likely to happen again: that is to say, a consequence of action or inaction may be overlooked until it is too late. We may continue to teach in our schools that men and women of self-respect will not submit without a struggle to conditions they think unfair; we may continue to have a kind word for even the unsuccessful rebel provided that he had a real grievance; we may glorify those who have won freedom by violence. When the foreseeable result follows we may express surprise

This, at least, is the danger as I see it. I should welcome the exposure of any flaw in my analysis and, still more, any suggestion for promoting the change of popular attitude that is necessary if a *de facto* colour bar is to be removed.

The University of British Columbia.

H. F. ANGUS

THE CANADIAN JOURNAL OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE

November, 1941

CONTENTS

French and English in the Economic Structure of Montreal	EVERETT C. HUGHES and MARGARET L. McDONALD
The Effect of the War on Oriental Minorities in Canada	H. F. ANGUS
The American-Born Japanese and the World Crisis	FORREST E. LA VIOLETTE
The Canadian Agricultural Tariff of 1843	ROBERT LESLIE JONES
A Measurement of the Productive Capacity of Wealth	E. F. BEACH
Studies of the Cost of Living in Canada	D. C. MACGREGOR
Some Swedish Stepping Stones in Economic Theory: A Comment	BENJAMIN CAPLAN
The History of Political Ideas	C. B. MACPHERSON

The Canadian Political Science Association

President, H. MICHELL

Past Presidents

J. C. HENMEON

W. C. CLARK

Vice-Presidents

C. A. DAWSON

G. A. ELLIOTT

F. A. KNOX

H. MARSHALL

Secretary-Treasurer

C. A. ASHLEY

Managing Editor

V. W. BLADEN

Elected Members of the Executive Council

F. H. BROWN

R. B. BRYCE

H. McD. CLOKIE

A. W. CURRIE

R. MacG. DAWSON

G. HAYTHORNE

J. E. LATTIMER

A. R. M. LOWER

C. B. MACPHERSON

S. R. NOBLE

A. F. W. PLUMPTRE

E. E. REILLY

A. STEWART

MISS M. F. TIMLIN

W. J. WAINES

The Canadian Political Science Association was founded in 1913, and reorganized in 1929. The object of the Association is to encourage the investigation and study of economic, political, and social problems in Canada. The Association does not assume a partisan position. All shades of political and economic opinion are represented in its membership.

Annual Subscription \$3.00

Student Subscription \$1.50

The Association welcomes as members all who are interested in its objects. Members receive a copy of THE CANADIAN JOURNAL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE, published quarterly for the Association by the University of Toronto Press. Arrangements have been made for a combined subscription to this Association and to the Canadian Historical Association at a reduced rate of \$4.00 a year. Members of the Association may subscribe to the Royal Economic Society through the Association at a reduced rate of \$3.00 a year.

Communications, including applications for membership, should be addressed to the Secretary-Treasurer,

C. A. ASHLEY,

273 Bloor St. W.,

Toronto, Ontario.

PRINTED IN CANADA

This copy is to be used solely for research or private study and any use of the copy for a purpose other than research or private study may require the authorization of the copyright owner of the work.