NAC - JAPANESE CANADIAN - RG 36/27 Vol 3 File 66

FOLDER NO. 10

CANADA

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR

JAPANESE DIVISION

749 Somerset Building,
Winnipeg, Manitoba.
February 18th, 1946.

Mr. T. B. Pickersgill, Commissioner,
Dept. of Labour, Japanese Division, Vancouver.

Re - Recent Interviewing of Internees by R.C.M.P. at Angler.

Replying to your letter of February 4th, our report to you, a copy of which was sent to Ottawa on January 14th, contained a statement that some people signed subject to conditions contained in Bill 15 and those who signed accordingly were especially marked. When this report was received at Ottawa the Department of Justice made inquiry of the R.C.M.P. and had statements made by Corporal Lambie of the R.C.M.P., who went to Angler with me, and myself who witnessed exactly what was said at these interviews.

In view of the fact that the R.C.M.P. had already made investigation of this matter, and had statements on file at Ottawa pertaining to the matter, we did not think it judicious to ask the Officer Commanding to interrogate one of his men after he had already been questioned and a report sent to Ottawa. The report from the Winnipeg R.C.M.P. on this question was sent to the Commissioner of the R.C.M.P., Ottawa, on January 18th.

The question of Bill 15 was apparently much discussed in the camp before we arrived and the Japanese knew a great deal more about it than we did. Our statement to them was that we had not read the Act and, therefore, knew nothing about it and in no way would we make any statement as to its effect or privileges. All we were interested in was to find out whether or not they wished to sign. The outcome was that these people said they would sign if they were permitted to insert "subject to conditions of Bill 15". Otherwise, they would not sign at all. After discussing the matter with Corporal Lambie we felt that if the insertion of this sentence voided the form it would be no worse than if they did not sign at all and, therefore, we would be in the same position. If, on the other hand, the signatures on these forms with a notation were of any use to the Department they would be better than none at all. We were specifically asked whether or not they would be permitted to return to Canada after being repatriated to Japan and the statement given to them in reply by Corporal Lambie was that he did not know, nor would he make any comment whatsoever upon it.

It was also stated by these Japanese who inserted this sentence that they could not sign away their Canadian citizenship and quoted the Department of State who advised some Japanese in the camp, who formerly applied for

Mr. Pickersgill, February 18/46.

cancellation of their citizenship, that they could not renounce their citizenship by application if they were Canadian Born. We knew nothing whatsoever about this matter and refused to discuss it. It was the contention of the Japanese that Bill 15 gave some protection to their citizenship irrespective of whether they signed for repatriation or not and, therefore, they would not sign at all unless the insertion were made.

There was no authority for permitting this addition to the form but, as I stated before, it was done solely to show the exact position that these certain internees took. To merely explain the position by letter may have been rather ineffective but with signed forms stating a certain condition, the matter was brought to the fore. These certain men wish to escort their families to Japan at the expense of the Government and then expect to claim re-entry into Canada by virtue of their Canadian citizenship.

Our judgment may have been in error in allowing any addition to the form but we felt that a more useful purpose could be served by letting the few forms be completed.

FRANK L. ERNST,
Supervisor for Manitoba
and Northwestern Ontario.

360 Homer Street,

VANCOUVER, B.C.

4th February 1946.

Mr. F.L. Ernst, WINNIPEG, Manitoba.

Re: RECENT REINTERVIEWING OF INTERNEES AT ANGLER BY R.C.M.P.

Seven Canadian-born internees at Angler who were recently reinterviewed by the R.C.M.P. have written to the Minister of Justice as follows:

> "On the said Declaration Form when I inquired about the following sentence - ". . hereby declare my wish to relinquish my British nationality and to assume the status of a national of Japan. ." the representatives assured me that the new order-in-council provided that the Canadian-born Japanese will not have their Canadian citizenship taken away from them when they are sent to Japan. I fully trusted the words of the representatives and signed my name. However, to avoid any misunderstanding, I wish to make clear that I, by signing on the said form, do not declare my wish to relinquish my British nationality."

We also note that some of the signed forms have written on them in ink: "Subject to conditions of Bill 15", and initialled by the internee.

I would like you to see the O.C., R.C.M.P., and have the member of the Force called in by the O.C. and asked if he did make this statement to the Canadian-born internees or not, and let us have a reply to this in writing.

We would also like to know why some of the persons reinterviewed were permitted to write on these forms. The member of the Force who did the interviewing might also be able to tell us what the internee meant in using the words - "subject to conditions of Bill 15."

It has been understood from the outset that the signing of these requests for repatriation was strictly voluntary, and the wording of the documents is clear. We do not see why any qualifications were required as the only object was to find out definitely whether they wished to sign or not.

c.c. Mr. A. MacNamara, OTTAWA

T.B. PICKERSGILL,
Commissioner.

360 Homer Street,

VANCOUVER, B.C.

AIRMAIL. 4th February 1946.

Attention: Mr. Pammett.

A. MacNamara Esq.,
Deputy Minister of Labour,
OTTAWA.

Re: COMMUNICATIONS TO MINISTER OF JUSTICE FROM SEVEN CANADIAN-BORN INTERNEES.

I received your letter of January 29th enclosing copies of seven communications directed to the Minister of Justice from Canadian-born internees at Angler.

I am enclosing copy of letter written today to Mr. Ernst at Winnipeg, asking him if he would see the R.C.M.P. officer who did the interviewing of these internees at Angler recently, asking the R.C.M.P. officer to advise us whether he did tell Canadian-born internees that they would not have their Canadian citizenship taken away from them when they were sent to Japan.

We are of the opinion that if the R.C.M.P. did tell these internees that their citizenship would not be taken away, that we should consider the signed applications null and void.

T.B. PICKERSGILL,
Commissioner.

360 Homer Street,

VANCOUVER, B.C.

AIRMAIL. 30th January 1946

Attention: Mr. Brown.

A. MacNamara Esq.,
Deputy Minister,
Department of Labour,
OTTAWA.

Re: RESULTS OF REINTERVIEWING PERSONS OF JAPANESE ORIGIN INTERNED AT ANGLER.

You will recall your memorandum to me of December 29th suggesting the procedure which should be followed in reinterviewing naturalized Canadians and Canadian-born persons of Japanese origin interned at Angler. You suggested that we should have Mr. Ernst at Winnipeg accompany a member of the R.C.M.P. so that he might witness the reinterviewing and send to us a report.

I think we agreed that two groups at Angler should be reinterviewed. The first group would include naturalized Canadians and Canadian-born who stated when they were interviewed last summer, that they were undecided about repatriation. The second group included those naturalized Canadians and Canadian-born who declared their intentions of going to Japan but did not wish to sign the official forms. It was agreed that there would be no point in reinterviewing Japanese nationals because all of them were being repatriated, nor should we reinterview naturalized Canadians or Canadian-born Japanese who stated definitely last summer that they wished to remain in Canada.

We are enclosing two copies of the analysis which shows the results of the reinterviewing, we thought you might like one to send over to R.C.M.P. headquarters. For purposes of comparison, to see what change occurred as a result of the reinterviewing, it might be well for you to refer to my memoranda of July 12th and 14th last, when we sent down the results of the interviewing done last summer.

We now show a total of 419 internees. 413 of these are presently at Angler. Two of the remaining six are in the Slocan City Hospital and the other four are in the New Denver Sanatorium.

The analysis which we sent to you last summer showed 415 internees at Angler. This figure should actually have been 414 because you will note that the name UYENO, Kiyoshi, No. 00596, appears twice. The name appears in the list of

Japanese nationals who were undecided about repatriation, which is correct. It also appears in the list of those wishing to remain in Canada, which was not correct.

A Japanese national internee at Angler, KANESASHI, Kisao, No. 08021, died recently. He was included in the analysis sent down last summer in the group of those who declared that they were going to Japan but did not wish to sign official forms.

A summary of the results shows that there are now at Angler twelve Japanese nationals, fifteen naturalized Canadians and 124 Canadian-born who signed voluntarily the declaration forms. There are eighty Japanese nationals, six naturalized Canadians and thirteen Canadian-born who state that they intend to go to Japan but still do not wish to sign the official forms. There are seventy-four Japanese nationals, twenty naturalized Canadians, sixty-six Canadian-born and three U.S. citizens who state that they wish to remain in Canada.

We should have some advice from you as to what is to be done with the three U.S. citizens at Angler, and what we will do about those six naturalized Canadians and thirteen Canadian-born who state that they intend to go to Japan but do not wish to sign forms. I presume that you will not want them included on the deportation orders, but that we will accommodate their wishes about going to Japan at such time as we are sending back any members of their families.

T.B. PICKERSGILL,
Commissioner of
Japanese Placement.

July 5th. 1942.
Immigration Building
Vancouver B.C.

Commissioner Mead,
The B.C. Security Commission,
Marine Building.
Vancouver B.C.

Sir:

I, HIROSHI YONEKURA, herewith agree to the terms stated by the Nisei Mass Evacuation Group, and I request my release from the Immigration Detention Building, in order that I may co-operate with the government in Mass Evacuation.

Respectfully Yours,
Hiroshi Yonekura.

Our ref. No. 66

20th April 1942

Eric R. Thomson Esq.,
615 Pender Street West,
VANCOUVER, B.C.

Dear Mr. Thomson,

I am directed by the Chairman of this Commission, Mr. Austin C. Taylor, to reply to your letter of 17th April with reference to the Japanese evacuation.

I may state that it is the intention of the Commission to conduct the evacuation in such a manner as to keep families together as much as possible. In these plans the Commission must take into consideration accommodation available. Where a temporary separation occurs, the effort will be made to arrange reunion if at all possible.

Yours very truly,

Grant MacNeil,
Assistant to the Chairman.

CGM/EG

ERIC R. THOMSON
BARRISTER AND SOLICITOR
NOTARY PUBLIC
615 PENDER STREET WEST

66

TEL.: PACIFIC 6545

VANCOUVER,
BRITISH COLUMBIA April 17, 1942.

Austin Taylor Esq.,
B.C.Security Commission,
355 - Burrard Street,
Vancouver B.C..

Dear Sir,

This morning I called to see you on behalf of some Canadian-born Japanese, and in your absence had a long discussion with Mr. Shirras. The point on which I desired information was what steps would be taken to keep the families of these people together, once they were moved from the defence area. As you had not returned when Mr. Shirras and I had ended our talk, I requested him to mention to you that I had called, and the nature of my enquiry.

I think that I am speaking not only for these Niseis but for the average unbiassed Canadian in admitting that these people have to be moved, but that there should not take place any unnecessary hardship. These Japanese, - married and with families of young children, - are badly worried over what they think is the impending and permanent separation of husband from wife etc., and a statement by the Commissioner that efforts would be made to move families as a unit as far as possible, and in any event, that there was no intention of permanently breaking up the families of well-behaved people would be welcomed.

In writing this letter to you I am aware of the difficulties surrounding your task, difficulties to a large extent caused by the reluctance of less-exposed parts of Canada to take these people.

T/T.

Yours faithfully,

Eric R. Thomson

Mc 21

April 6th, 1942.

Norman F. Black, Esq.,
Sec. Consultative Council,
4390 Locarno Crescent,
VANCOUVER, B.C.

Dear Sir:

1. Receipt of your letter of the 31st ultimo is acknowledged.

2. Your suggestions have been considered by the B.C. Security Commission and it is deemed advisable by the Commission not to make the changes suggested by you, at the present time.

3. Your interest in this matter is much appreciated.

Yours very truly,

F.J. Mead, Commissioner,
B.C. Security Commission.

FJM/DR

4390 Locarno Crescent, Vancouver,
March 31, 1942.

Major Austin Taylor,
Chairman,
B.C.Security Commission,
Marine Building,
VANCOUVER, B.C.

Sir:

As the outcome of an informal conference of a group of public-spirited men and women, officially or unofficially representing a large number of organizations interested in the problems confronting the Commission, a Consultative Council was recently organized. The primary aims of the Council are to facilitate the exchange of information and suggestions between the groups concerned, to avoid duplication of effort and to simplify avenues for the submission of representations intended to assist the Commission.

At a meeting of this Consultative Council, held to-day, consideration was devoted to the impasse arising from the difficulty of securing proper co-operation between various elements in the Japanese community. In this connection I was instructed to offer, on behalf of the Council, the following proposal, in the hope that it might contribute to the success of the policies of the Commission.

It is suggested that while the local problem, tending to paralyse vigorous effort and prompt decisions on the part of the Japanese community, is one that affects most directly the Issei and Nisei proups, it also very directly affects the White community as well. We therefore request your consideration of the possible wisdom of enlarging the central committee, through which the Commission deals with the Japanese Community, by the inclusion of (say) three Occidentals familiar with the Japanese language and likely to be able to secure better co-operation and to avoid cleavages based primarily upon existing tensions between the two dominant groups in the Japanese community itself. The Council is inclined to the view that the chairman of this joint committee might well be selected from among the White members of the committee.

If this suggestion commends itself to you as deserving serious and further consideration, the Council has instructed me to confer with you if the Commission ~~if you~~ thinks that such conference might perhaps be helpful.

Very truly yours,
Norman F. Black
Norman F. Black, Hon. Sec. of
Consultative Council.

Phone: AL 0105 L.

3rd April 1942

Mr. Norman F. Black,
4390 Locarno Crescent,
VANCOUVER, B.C.

Dear Mr. Black,

I wish to thank you for your letter of recent date, enclosing copy of a communication addressed to the Chairman proposing the appointment of a joint Council on the problems of the Japanese community.

The Reverend Mr. Norman is going to assist us in some of these problems, and is now attached to our staff.

In addition to this I shall discuss with Commissioner Mead the proposals set forth in your communication.

Yours very truly,

Grant MacNeil,
Assistant to the Chairman.

CGM/EG

4390 Locarno Crescent, Vancouver,
March 31, 1942.

Dear Mr. MacNeill,

Acting under instructions based upon considerations of the urgency of the matters dealt with, I have forwarded to Major Taylor the letter of which a copy is herewith enclosed.

Obviously, however, it concerns you also, in you official relation to the Commission.

Yours very truly,

Norman F. Black

Norman F. Black,

Hon.Sec. of Consultative Council
on Problems of Citizenship
arising from War Conditions.

Mr. Grant MacNeill,

Secretary,

B.C.Security Commission.

L. H. 3A

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

C.I.B.

IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE

DIV. FILE No. 945/1-84

H. Q. FILE No.

Vancouver, B.C.,
March 16th, 1942.

File

Asst. Commissioner F.J. Mead,
B.C.Security Commission,
Marine Building,
VANCOUVER , B.C.

Sir:

Re: Japanese Canadian Citizens
League (Nisei), B.C.

I attach hereto copy of communication from the Asst. Intelligence Officer, and enclosure referred to therein.

CHHill

(C.H.Hill) A/Comm'r.,
Commanding "E" Division.

JKB/ES
Encl.

D 945-1-J-15

Div. File No. 945/1-84

March 10, 1942.

S E C R E T

MEMORANDUM TO:

The O.C., "E" Div.,
R.C.M.P., VANCOUVER, B. C.

Re: Japanese Canadian Citizens League (Nisei), B. C.

Forwarded herewith is an interesting report concerning the Kibei nisei which is self-explanatory, and which is forwarded for your information. Please draw this report to the attention of Assistant Commissioner Mead.

(C. Batch), Insp.,
Asst. Intelligence Officer.

Enc. 1.

A General Explanation of the Kibei Group

The Kibei nisei, usually called Kibei, represent the group of young Japanese who were born in this country but who were sent back to Japan for their education. As a result, they think as Japanese and at the same time possess American citizenship and the privileges attending this status. The work "kibei" literally means "returned to America".

There are no figures that give the actual percentage of the kibei population but it is generally conceded that approximately ten per cent of the Japanese-American citizens fall into the kibei category. They are generally considered the most dangerous element since they are the only ones in the entire Japanese community that have come in actual contact with the present day fascist Japan. However, it must be remembered that most of them returned to this country by actual choice. Those who were really dissatisfied have subsequently returned.

Reasons for the Increase of Kibeis

Since 1929 the number of kibei niseis in America has steadily increased. This was due to the following reasons:

1. It became increasingly difficult for the issei to maintain their children in Japan due to economic difficulties following the stock market crash.

2. The niseis who were sent to Japan for their education began to graduate from middle schools and high schools.

3. Those nisei sent back to Japan with the intent of remaining permanently elected to return to this country, realizing that America offered more opportunities.

4. Many issei began to send for their children when the prolonged separation became unbearable.

5. Most niseis who were sent to Japan lived with their relatives and when the strain of living with relatives became too acute they implored their parents to send for them.

6. Some isseis who returned to Japan with their children, upon finding that life was too hard in Japan, sent their children back to this country to live.

Process of Americanization

After returning to the United States, most kibeis realized the need for Americanization and undertook immediately to learn English. Although they had studied English in Japan, instructors there were very poor and the kibeis' English as a rule was unintelligible. In the larger coast cities there were a number of Americanization classes in various high schools and junior high schools to which these kibeis went.

The object of these classes was to teach immigrant groups practical English. The results were not particularly successful for the kibeis since they were thrown together with other kibeis they ended up by speaking Japanese, which, after all, was their native tongue. Most of the kibeis in these classes were over 18 years of age and found attending school with younger children rather irksome. Also many were forced to help the family finances and consequently left school. All in all, the process of Americanization was slow and incomplete. Most kibeis have never really mastered the English language. It is necessary at this time to stress again the extreme disparity between the two languages and the difficulty for a Japanese to learn English.

A great number of kibei did succeed in becoming Americanized enough to win admittance into nisei groups where their Americanization was hastened. As a whole, however, the kibei still remain a distinct group, neither issei nor nisei.

Psychologically and emotionally the kibei are unstable, compared to the rest of the Japanese groups. First, they underwent the traumatic experience of leaving their parents at an early age to go to another country to live with total strangers. Then after they had become accustomed to one environment they were thrust into their first environment. During their separation from their parents they had idealized their fathers and mothers and upon returning to this country they found that their parents' cultural level was considerably below the Japanese average.

Of course, the long separation had severed the bond existing between parent and child and so the kibei was always maladjusted to his environment. As a result, there was a continual frustration which resolved itself into resentment of his environment.

Classification of Kibeis

The kibei group can be roughly classified into two groups. First, the kibeis who returned to this country prior to the Manchurian Incident. These kibeis were educated and lived in a Japan which was undergoing an upsurge of liberalism. Most of these kibeis are good Americans, regardless of the fact that they do not speak English. They believe in democratic ideals and deplored Japan's growing militarism. The second group of kibeis are the ones who returned after the Manchurian Incident. These kibeis were given a full dose of fascist propaganda. They lived under war conditions and were inculcated with war enthusiasm. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that even they preferred to return to this country. This group of kibei is essentially pro-Japan, and a vigorous educational programme should be directed at them. The most dangerous of the kibei group are those who have returned in the last two years. These kibeis have

lived for some time under strict war conditions, almost total war. They were steeled to the brutalities and hardships of war. They saw their brothers and friends all sent to the front.

At the time of their return to this country they were questioned by Japanese authorities and it is our belief that some of them might have agreed to engage in espionage work here. The number of kibeis who returned in the recent past is very few compared to other years.

The kibeis as a group are suspected by even the nisei. However, the majority of them are neutral and could be brought around with the correct kind of educational programme. We consider it advisable, however, to keep close watch over the kibei who have returned from Japan in the last two years.

Due to the constant suspicion harassing them, many loyal kibeis are becoming embittered. Therefore it is most urgent that an Americanization programme be set up immediately.

The Kibei Organization

The thinking kibeis realized the need for some organization to aid their Americanization programme. The first organization of kibei in Los Angeles was the Nisei Association which was short lived. After the collapse of the Nisei Association a second group was formed which was eventually affiliated with the Japanese American's Citizen's League. The Kibei Division was to have its own cabinet and conduct its meetings in the Japanese language.

The Kibei Division and the J.A.C.L. worked in harmony up to 1938. From this period the Kibei Division showed inclinations of independent actions. This, we believe, was due to the influence of certain aggressive kibei who were but recently returned. This small group had worked itself into the leadership of the entire group and were doing their best to discourage and sabotage the liberal elements in the organization.

After checking the dissenting liberal group, the leadership clique became more and more aggressive and drifted farther away from the parent organization. Undemocratic procedure was evident in most of their activities. Shortly before the war, there was open dissention between the kibei Division and the J.A.C.L.

On the night of December 7th, 1941, the So. District Council of the J.A.C.L. formed the Anti-Axis Committee to cope with war conditions. Various committees and sub-committees were formed but only two kibeis were included. Neither did the kibei division offer cooperation.

The undemocratic leaders of the kibei group finally drew up a resolution arbitrarily dissolving the organization. The resolution as a whole is acceptable

to its members. However, some members disagree about the dissolution and protested to that effect in a petition. The matter now lies in the hands of the J.A.C.L. and the Kibei Division. A compromise has been reached whereby the division would be retained but the cabinet abolished. Final decision will be handed down sometime this month.

We feel that it is advisable to retain this Kibei Division since it is easier to keep tab on them in case any subversive elements should attempt to brew trouble. It would be an excellent medium to educate the kibei group if the leadership could be placed in the right hands.
