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Annual Report.

Since September 1944 when I started teaching in the High School at Tashme, many things have happened in the Canadian Japanese situation and these are reflected in the students--their whole lives and futures are affected so deeply by the government policy and orders.

Before March 1945, most of the students expected that, unless they were able to move east earlier, they would be in the camp until the end of the war and then would move east or back to their former homes. They were once more fairly secure after the shock of evacuation. [That hope was shattered by the notices posted March 16 stating that "every person of Japanese origin 16 years of age or over is required to report to R.C.M.P. Detachment on April 9 - 13 to signify his or her intention concerning repatriation." (to Japan). Those who wished to remain in Canada "should now re-establish themselves East of the Rockies as the best evidence of their intentions to co-operate with the Canadian Government in carrying out its policy of dispersal. Failure to accept employment East of the Rockies may be regarded at a later date as lack of co-operation with the Canadian Government."]

The next four weeks, the uppermost topic in everyone's mind was "What are we going to do?" Their property, real and personal, which at the time of Evacuation was left for safe-keepin in the hands of the Custodian of Alien Property, had been sold largely without their consent, and often without their knowledge. It has been quite a common experience for a man to receive a notice that his farm, home or furniture was sold a year previously, often for much less than its market value and with numerous handling charges deducted from the proceeds. Boys and girls wanted to stay in Canada but their parents were afraid they couldn't move East at once and support their family now that their property and businesses had been taken from them. If they didn't go East there was the threat of disloyalty; if they did go they would have to take whatever work was offered them whether it was suitable or not. Tales came back of men going East to jobs already filled. Housing was uncertain. They could only hold their jobs in Tashme or accept employment in B.C. if they signed for repatriation. The isolation and lack of freedom of such a camp as this produces such tensions and fears in people that it takes more courage than an outsider often realizes to step out into an almost unknown and in some cases hostile Eastern Canada. And so the month of March wore on with endless discussion and little happiness for anyone.

During the week of Easter when Exams were being held, the documents to be signed came to Tashme. The night they

came a meeting was held for all Nisei (Canadian Born Japanese). Most of the older students went. There was Grammar exam the nextd day but what was grammar when their whole future hung in the balance and the tipping of the scales was not really in their control but in that of their parents and of circumstances. At the meeting they found out that if they signed for repatriation they also had to sign a document which stated "I.....hereby declare my desire to relinquish my British nationality and to assume the status of a national of Japan. Further I request the government of Canada under the conditions set out in the statement of the Minister of Labour dated February 15, 1945 to arrange for and effect my repatriation to Japan. I declare that I fully understand the contents of this document and I voluntarily affix my signature hereto. Signed...." (Gov't of Canada Declaration No. C.B.W.). They could not sign for "repatriation" without also signing away their birth-right of Canadian Citizenship. They came back to study, some bitter at the injustice of the whole thing, all of them very much disturbed. They didn't want to go to Japan but even if they had to go now with their parents, if only they didn't have to give up their citizenship they could have come back when they were of age and more independent. What could they do? If their parents went back, could they or would their parents allow them to stay here alone without home or relatives? How could they live? Where was the financial support to come from? And so they discussed it for an hour till the immediate prospect of tomorrow's exam called them back to verbs and pronouns.

Their Easter holidays were in the week of the signing. Many older people as well as boys and girls signed thinking they could cancel it later. Boys and girls unwillingly signed so that their families would not be broken up.

In May there came notices that those who were going to remain in Canada would be moved to other camps in the interior of B.C. and "repatriates" from those camps brought to Tashme. Starting early in June and going on into July, once a week a number of families were moved out on 2 to 7 days notice to these other camps. It was a sickening sight to see two or three truckloads each with twenty to thirty people from tiny children to old men and women leaving here for Hope, fourteen miles away, in open trucks on a dusty mountain road--the first leg of their journey to another temporary home in a ghost town. School boys, who had not signed but whose parents had, were given notices to move to these other camps. The parents of some boys of 16 refused to let them go--you could hardly blame them. For other boys, Mr. Best managed to find work and lodging in Ontario and they went directly East.

When we came back in September there was an atmosphere of hopelessness and despair among the students which we felt more strongly than ever before. The sheep had been separated from the goats. Only those who had signed remained. About half the High School students had gone and their places were taken by students coming from the other centres. The old and new clung to their own groups, lonely for their old friends. At first when school started there wasn't much enthusiasm. What good would it be if we had to go to Japan?

It wasn't long before an active Student's Council had a relief drive for old clothes, sports and clubs underway. Into these they threw their energy and spare time and worked hard to keep their school studies up. As the days went by hope grew that the cancellations would be granted and in the busyness of activities they tried to forget their deep anxiety about the future but their fears were never completely gone. Sometimes in a study period one notices the thoughtful, almost fearful, face of some boy or girl or hears the dragging step of the heavy work boots of one of the boys going slowly down the hall after school.

Just at the time of the Christmas exams the now famous Orders-in-Council 7355-57 were made public. That announcement shattered these people's hopes that their requests for repatriation would be cancelled and they would be allowed to remain in Canada. The Nisei could stay but what use was that if their parents couldn't? How can a boy or girl of 16 in grade X, without relatives or financial support stay in a country which will not allow their parents to remain? How many of our parents would have allowed us at 16 or even 18 to stay here alone if they were going back to the country of their origin knowing they could in all probability never return? That is what these boys and girls and their parents are facing now: a bitter struggle for both. These boys and girls have grown through this desperate struggle within themselves. It has made them stronger and better boys and girls than they might have been if life had been normal and secure. They will be worthy citizens who will contribute to world brotherhood and unity wherever they may live.

Winifred J. McBride

WSMS. Reports for 1945.
Done 1946.

ANNUAL REPORT.

K.G.

School opening in September found us like the old woman who lived in the shoe for we had many more children than we had expected. Our classes were too crowded to do effective work. We were fortunate in having Mr Williams a graduate of U.B.C. come to our aid for boy's work as Mr. Best, who had helped mould the character of the school from the beginning had felt it necessaryto resign. Still we are understaffed and because we were unable to secure the extra teacher required.

From April to July the morale of the school was suffering under a severe strain. The uncertainity, indecision and fear caused by the required signature of "repatriation"forms by all persons over sixteen who were unable to go east, found an echo in the unsettled conditions of school life. To children of that age the problem was alarmingly realistic, for how could they decide to step out into a hostile world to make their own living if their parents, despairing over the loss of their homes and property, felt they had no opportunity in this country and must sign for Japan. Some pupils reluctantly and half-heartedly obeyed their parents and resolved to return with them; others withstanding the decision of their parents were able to influence them in their choice; still others won permission to remain in Canada even though their parents returned to Japan. Some of these moved East early in July and through the kindness of Mr. Best were able to obtain positions which they seem to be filling creditably while continuing their studies at night school. Very proud are the parents of those young people now and we believe that their courage in pioneering will have its reward in the better understanding of the whole Nisei question in Canada.

During those unsettled days of spring, in spite of the strain or, perhaps because of it, the energetic Sports Committee of the school planned and carried through a successful Field Day on May 24. Track training and competition in the events made them forget their own problems and the whole community laid aside its tension for a few hours to cheer and encourage youth in their play. Further inspiration was given that day by the visit of Rev. R.A. and Mrs. Redman of Chilliwack with two members of the Y.P.S. and Major Larke, padre of the military camp there. They brought a message of cheer from the outside world and delighted the students by sharing in the fun at their evening party.

Even before school closed for summer vacation notes of the sadness of farewell were sounding in the community. As school mates and teachers began to move East. Almost every night we interrupted our studies to go out to wave them off and returned to classrooms having vacancies which hurt. Thenwhen the real Exodus took place in July it seemed as if half the school had gone.

From September the classes has to assimilate many new members. Pupils coming back late from work projects such as apple picking, hop-picking and tomato canning caused delay in the organization for school work. With the steady grind of preparation, teaching, assignment, and tests in more courses than any teacher should carry, there was little time to devote to extra-curricular activities. Our enthusiastic Student Council took up this task and soon had numerous clubs functionning: Drama, Debating, Glee, Orchestra, Handicrafts, Photography gave students scope for their special interests. While Baseball, Volley Ball, Ping Pong, Basketball organized by the Sports Committee have supplied the much needed recreation. A Relief Drive in the community met with a generous response and students were kept busy as they met in groups to launder and repair until the cartons were finally packed ready for transportation.

Christmas was again brightened for us by the kind thoughtfulness of friends in Winnipeg and Chilliwack. Many cartons of clothing were donated to the Relief Drive and even more acceptable were the beautifully wrapped personal Christmas gifts in sufficient numbers to bring each of our two hundred students great joy in the knowledge that some kind friends in the outside world still remembered and cared for them.

Deep was our gratitude and unbounded the joy of the pupils when on the very day of the school party there arrived by express a weighty parcel from the Hudson's Bay Co., Vancouver, with a generous donation of candy, that almost unobtainable luxury. Nothing of all the Christmas program produced such shouts of joy as that box which was carefully counted and divided so that each member of every class should have his portion.

On our return from Christmas vacation we were greeted by the report that there had been an official announcement of the conditions under which "Repatriation" was to take place. No one knew whose turn would come first and every family began making preparations for the order might come any day. It was

It was not easy to begin school under these conditions but here again the students surprised us by the suggestion that we put on a School Concert. With school every night and without any "place" to practise during the day we felt it an impossibility but their persistence overcame all obstacles and by using the bath house, the Scout Den, and our two small houses they were able to prepare a three hour program. The success of the concert was beyond our expectations for it ran three nights, the first one, a presentation to the Elementary School pupils and teachers who so kindly allow us to occupy their buildings; and the succeeding nights to a full house of appreciative community members. Generous donations for Relief have come in but the best effect of all has been the bolstering of the morale of the students.

All through this year they have courageously faced "bad news" with creative action taking up the challenge of the difficult. If they have learned to face life in this way we need not fear for them wherever their future may lie. If Cancellation is permitted they will become more useful Canadian citizens. If they are forced to go to Japan with their parents they will have greater courage to face the horrors of starvation that awaits them.

Every day one cannot but be impresses by the spirit shown by these young students in their willingness to share the responsibility for community activities. Many of them are working full time or part time in the store, general office, the Hospital, the Elementary School, the mill before attending school at night. Besides they are called upon to meet the need of many voluntary organizations a Y.P.S., Sunday School, Scouts, Guides, C.G.I.T. Most of them find that keeping busy is the best cure for the feeling of insecurity which forms the background of their lives. There are unlimited opportunities for sharing the message of Christ's way with them and none better perhaps than the daily contacts of the classroom where they eagerly seek the way which will bring justice and brotherhood to all. We who have the privilege of seeing deeply into these young lives covet for the youth of Canada the gifts of friendship which they will bring to High School students when allowed to associate freely once more. We covet too, for the church people the opportunity of working out in their very midst a project in world friendship and brotherhood by opening a Christian home to one of these girls or boys who has the courage to remain a Canadian citizen even though it means giving up of his own home and his people. the

Miss Greenbank

ANNUAL REPORT.

A.M. Mitchell

Our work this year has been bound up with the trying experience through which the people of Tashme have been passing. Church work has become largely an attempt to help them with the immediate problem. Each new situation as it arose during the year challenged her. There were times when we wished our church might have taken quicker action, as for example, in the spring when assistance in finding homes and work in the east would have saved many from signing for repatriation. Nevertheless, the church has proven itself a friend to these people in a very real sense.

Rev. W.R. MacWilliams, as our pastor here, has become the friend and counsellor of the community. Countless numbers, young and old, Christian and non-Christian, simple folk and the leaders in this community have found their way to the door of his little log cabin. He has spent long hours listening to their problems, giving advice not only to individuals but to groups. He has championed their cause wherever carelessness, prejudice or greed have tried to take advantage of them. A young Nisei of thirty remarked, "I used to think Christianity was a religion of 'escape' and had no use for it. I realize now that I had completely misunderstood. I see now what it means and I do believe it is the only thing that will work in this world."

The visit of Dr. Arnup, our moderator, also made a deep impression on the people. When they sent their invitation to him to visit us here, they said that which reflected very clearly their attitude toward the church: "If he will come and listen to our story we will feel as if our father had visited us--for we realize that the church is our friend." They were not disappointed for his sympathetic listening to their story and his promise that he personally would speak for them wherever he had an opportunity greatly encouraged them.

The young people of Tashme for the last few months have been facing the possibility of either exile from their native land or separation from their families for life. In such circumstances unless one has within himself the spiritual resources to guide and strengthen him one is hopelessly bewildered. Week after week in Sunday School, study groups, church services and in life together in school and community these young people have learned much, but this crisis sharpened the issue and gave it a new urgency. Hence they were interested when a camp under the auspices of the Anglican and United Churches was planned with the theme "How can Nesei meet life creatively?". Two special speakers and four S.C.M. students motored up from Chilliwack and Vancouver. This

touch with a world from which we have been shut out was a delightful experience for them. Once more to have fellowship with Canadian young people, to sleep and eat together and in the friendly intimacy of a camp together to seek the truth about life and God--was in itself a reassuring experience for these young people. They know through that experience that a deep rich fellowship between our races is possible. Thus through comradeship, discussions and worship together some of them got a surer, firmer grasp on spiritual values and fresh courage for the difficult days ahead.

It was well they had had that experience for late in the fall it seemed certain their darkest forebodings would prove true; the government was planning to deport almost all those who had signed for repatriation. The Christians of the Anglican and United Churches met this crisis by sending out an appeal to Christian groups all over Canada. The "Nisei" had sent in two petitions to the government, one asking that they be permitted to stay in Canada , and the other that their parents be granted permission to stay with them. Copies of these two petitions and a letter in which they said, "We are appealing to you, Fellow-Christians, children of the same Heavenly Father, for sympathy and understanding," were put together into envelopes, addressed, sorted and made ready for mailing to 9000 groups in the two churches. These people never doubted that in the hour of their need the church would stand by them.

Early in theNew Year notices posted on all the public buildings contained instructions re the amount of baggage allowed each person to be repatriated. Their property, left in the handsof the Custodian, has been sold, on the whole without their consent and in many cases without their knowledge. During the three years here they have gathered around them a few things, nevertheless not even these can be taken as a whole. No large articles such as stoves, tables, beds, sewing machines may be included in the 175 lbs baggage allowed each person. The government says they may have as much as 250 lbs. sent later. In the meantime with whom can they leave it? These are the very things that they must have when they return and also they are the very things that it is impossible to buy in Japan today.

One day in the wash house while the women were scrubbing their clothes and discussing this new turn in their troubles, a Buddhist woman paused in her work for a moment and remarked, "I'm going to ask the church people to keep mine and send them to me later. You can trust them!"

At present it is certain the Canadian born will

not be deported but that has only served to intensify the agony in many a heart. Can parents be persuaded to allow their sons and daughters to stay? Can boys and girls bear the loneliness of separation for life from their parents? Boys of 18 and 19 have decided to stay although in some cases they will have no relatives in this country, no work and no funds.

Last summer several boys and girls of sixteen, who hadn't signed for repatriation although their parents had, were given notice to leave Tashme withinso many days. Some felt forced to sign. Others appealed to the church for aid and homes and work were found for them in the east.

Now, once again, boys and girls who haven't finished High School are in need of help. Will the church assist us to find for them homes, work and a chance to finish their education? Will the church definitely do something to help those families who may be able to stay to find suitable work and homes? Will it actively work until these people have the same rights as all other Canadian citizens, namely the right to own land and homes in which they may become independent and self-respecting citizens. We must have brotherhood in Canada and that means equality in these simple fundamental rights of citizenship. They trust the church because they believe she has stood more than any other group for justice and brotherhood. Many of them have come to see that the Christian way of brotherhood is the only solution of life's problems, personal or national, and that, not because they have read or heard the Christian message but because they have seen it in action in a difficult life situation.

May McLachlan.