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Box: 1
File: 4
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TEXT OF SPEECH BY W. ANACK RE
WORK OF CHURCH IN JAPANESE RELOCATION CENTRES

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Add. MSS
2119

First of all I should like to say how much pleasure it gives me to have the opportunity to tell you a bit about the work the Church has done in the Japanese Relocation Centres. As you know, shortly after Pearl Harbour all people of Japanese origin on the Pacific coast were evacuated from their homes. Some went first to Hastings Park - the Exhibition Building of Vancouver, and lived there for some time. But before the end of 1942 all had been sent to camps or relocation centres in the interior, beyond the 100 mile defence section along the coast. I was only in Taskone, but its work was typical of all I think.

I wish you could come with me to visit Taskone as it was. It was situated about 120 miles from Vancouver. We went to Hope on the Fraser River by the highway or train, and then fourteen miles up and up a winding mountain road with high rocky mountains on one side and a crashing stream in the valley on the other. Taskone itself had been a pure bred cattle (ranch) situated in a valley perhaps a mile wide and 2 or 3 mile long between mountains 4000' high. It is not a wonder that to us, the mountains were a constant source of beauty and wonder, a reminder of the majesty of God, but to the people who couldn't leave the valley they were a prison wall, a barrier that separated them from their friends, both from normal living. The farm had two huge beautiful barns and a number of smaller ones. The top half of these two large ones were used for the schools, the other half for the one and only large meeting hall, gym, dance hall, etc. The other barn was divided into two floors of one-roomed apartments for at least 4 people. They had a community kitchen on each floor to serve for cooking and dining rooms. One of the smaller barns was also divided into rooms for the school and a space for parties. No private stoves were permitted. Then the buildings were made into government stores. Then were over 2000 people. The majority of them lived in tar papered shacks built close together in rows. When I first visited Taskone I was amazed at the flower gardens in front of each house, the gardens at the back in their 20' of space, and the neatness of the rows of houses. When we went inside, people were glad to see us.

~~Then~~ You walked into the central Kitchen - 10 x 16. Off it on each side were 2 bedrooms 8 x 8. In these houses ~~at least~~ 5 people and up to 13 ~~were~~ lived. Often two families were in the one house sharing the same stove, etc. ~~The first winter people were cold but later~~ Furniture was sparse because they had been able to bring only 150# baggage per person + 75 for a child. So wooden benches and bunks served for chairs + beds.

The ~~Pictaps~~ houses were laid out in rows, ~~rumbo~~ with a woodshed joining each pair of houses. ~~so that~~ Going down the avenue one could hear almost any conversation carried on in even a normal tone and an Indian once remarked that he always knew when Miss Mac went to bed because he could hear her pulling out the studio couch!

Perhaps that will give you a slight picture of Tashme.

When we left the church was ~~XXX~~ in the community then - not yet out a group of people in Tashme and across Canada that cared about them and that did something about it. [When the church came in, it was regarded with distrust. This was supposedly a Xian country + look what it had done] ~~When we left,~~ ~~all~~ the community, Buddhist as well as Xian felt the church was their friend on whom they could count for help either in the centre or when they went East. Why?

The reason is two fold - the work done in the centres and the support + help church people in the East gave. I will only deal with the first.

Perhaps the biggest piece of work done was in the field of education. ~~In Tashme~~ At the evacuation the responsibility for the Japanese became Dominion. (Education is a provincial resp. normally including educ.) When the Dominion took over, they provided public school education - with almost no qualified teachers but refused to give High School educ. The High School Correspondence courses at Victoria did the best they could by providing courses + students at $9 a course - but few families can afford to spend $54 or more for one year's high school for one child. The minister, Mr. W.R. Wilkie, was besieged by ~~ten~~ agers each week saying, ~~Can't~~ we want High School. Can't the church do something about it?" ~~From this~~ ~~the~~ time. ~~time~~ The W.M.S. answered that call for need

and sent in Miss May McLachlan in the early spring of 1943. when I came in Sept. 44 there were 4 of us ~~in the~~ teaching 150 students, 90 of whom were in grade 9. Because ~~the~~ the Commission in charge of the camp refused to allow the church ~~or the parish~~ to build a H.S. or use any other buildings, we used the public school buildings after they were finished. So you saw boys & girls going to school at 3:30 and finally coming home weakly at 9:00 or 9:30 P.M. Friday was our day off - a good day for league games, skating parties, Council meetings, hikes etc. ~~Saturday~~ we had day school. - with recess in the daylight! You might find our school a bit different to usual. We had no janitor so the boys & girls elected monitors & each took turns in cleaning their rooms and setting them in order for the public school. ~~Happy Thanksgiving~~. We learned together. It wasn't ~~all~~ dull. You should have seen our lab - with about ~~total of~~ 10 equipment and ~~chemicals~~, ~~and~~ ~~much~~ handmade equipment. There were too many for the lot so we had 25 students in ~~each group all~~ ~~sets~~ ~~sets~~ in one of the classrooms with 6 beakers. They loved it. ~~and~~ and almost no more ~~proper~~ proper equipment.

Saturday was our big day with discussion groups on Kenkel's work "What it means to grow up" and etiquette, boy and girl relationships. In the afternoon we had an hour of music in which we learned to (from records) know & love good music (from records.) as well as semi-popular & popular.

On Sundays we had a large 55 — of some 200 regular attenders and two church services. The ~~first~~ one in the morning ~~afternoon~~ was in Japanese, the evening one in English. Our Evening service was a Y.P. service, the average age of these ~~of~~ Missionaries being 18-20. In the smaller school building, ~~one~~ ~~room had~~ 2 rooms had movable partitions that could be taken

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cut. This was our church. Often on Sundays boys would come in to study - in one of the other rooms - or at least so they said. After the service anyone was free to play any of the records they wished. Quite often those who were studying would come in then. Sometimes they made a noise talking and for one would wonder about how many nuts one must remind them that sounds carried very clearly in that building & they must be quiet for that hour. But looking back a year later, a number of these boys were fairly regular in the evening services. Many are still going to church in the East.

The church work was not just school & church services though these stand out perhaps. ~~The various things that~~ There were so many little things too. Our minister went down to Vancouver every second week for a few days. There he would go shopping for the people - from all over the community they would come to him - every thing from baby soap and children's clothes to hotwater bottles, glasses eye, and engagement rings! People needed legal advice or help in settling business matters at the coast. He would get it fixed up for them. A young lawyer in Vancouver who cares about these people did a great deal in this connection. about justice & democ. in action

In Feb. 1945 when people were beginning to feel a bit secure, & feel that Canada might follow the example of the U.S. and allow the Japanese people to go back to the Coast, a notice suddenly appeared in ~~the~~ every town. In April, everyone over 16 must state whether he wished to be repatriated to Japan or remain in Canada in which latter case he or she must be prepared to go East of the Rockies at once as a sign of loyalty. The conditions for repatriation ~~to~~ on the surface appeared much more attractive than those to remain in Canada. Under the pressure such as threatened loss of work if they did not sign was used to induce people to sign for repatriation. * You would almost have to spend a few days in such a community to realize the fears that such enforced isolation from friends, * censorship, & containment of movement produces. It makes it very hard to think or decide

* Meeting in Bella Bella Apr. 10 re: no citizenship.
* repeal = no citizenship

business objectively. People came to us singly and in groups to ask what to do. It is rather interesting to note that when finally those who had not signed for repat. were sent to other centres, our church lost all but about 5 of its adult congreg. of around 100 and all but 60 of it's 35 Y.P. Yet the majority town as a whole signed for repatriation. The Anglican church had a similar loss in members. Later people came to us for help in getting cancellation of their repatriation forms.

When finally in the following spring, the government started their Canadian born Nisei go East, many boys & girls came to us saying — can you get me a school boy or girl job in the East. We wrote to almost all our friends & through their kindness and that of other people in some of the churches here many of our students came East. Then they had to find a place (& board) for their family & job for the father. These were needed before they could leave Tashme.

It is impossible to say in a short time all that one would like about this work. One other thing I would like to mention is that in some centres Tashme, the Anglican church had a daily Kindergarten for some 120 youngsters - a great help to mothers in those crowded homes. As The Anglican & U.C. worked after H.S. & Kindergarten in most of the centres, so we found them very co-op. & helpful so that we were able to hold all our Summer camps as joint camps. They were not looked upon as the U.C. & the Anglican but as the X'ians of the churches.

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There are so many things about Tashme & the camps that it is impossible to say all one would like. As the time when Dr Arnup was speaking in Vancouver in Sept. '45. the heads of the community asked him if he would come up. It meant for him the giving up of his day of rest but he came and heard their story of why they had signed. (They spoke of him as their little father) His visit and its results were remembered with deep gratitude by the community. Later the two churches sent out (10 days after the end of the training period & meetings were held) letters throughout Canada in regard to the situation. Boys & girls after school addressed stamped the envelopes & sorted them. When the threat of deportation was very imminent, (for the church staffs) there were among the things they mentioned, two Buddhist women were doing their washing clothes in the community washhouse. One said, "well I know what I'm going to do with the things I can't take with me (the) - I'm going to leave them with the Christians church. They will keep them safely for me & send them on later."

The camp was closed pretty well when the second boat went to Japan in Aug 1946. Our people are scattered from Montreal to Vancouver & Japan. But letters come from many telling how much they have gained from Toshme.

What is the total impact of that work? We can never know. But this I do know that many of our students who have to work for financial reasons have taken school boy or girl jobs in order to go to school or are going night school & finish their H.S. Many of our students who were in church in Toshme - and it was not the customary thing to be Christian there - are in our churches today. A reunion for the two missionaries of teacher & students in Toronto last spring had its program planned completely by the students. It included the two favourite hymns they chose but the title and ~~we would be building~~ It's quality made me realize in a way never before that it does matter if Christian principles underlie a school program even if religious instruction cannot be given. Some Many are better from the total experience but a number found a maturity and creative growth that will make them bigger people than they might have been had it not happened. (cut: that bitterness & disillusion) We who had the privilege of being a part of this work received far more from these people than we were able to give. You could see proved before your eye that love is a stronger power than force or prejudice and out of a situation that freed people down & fundamental issues in life, we knew the sustaining & helping power of God.

was asked if I would also tell you a bit about the Japanese
situation. My home is on Vancouver Island, B.C. and I was working in Van
at the time of the evacuation. As soon as Pearl Harbour occurred
restrictions were placed on all of Japanese origin. Within 24
hours the R.C.M.P. had picked up all who were considered dangerous
to the public safety - a relatively small no. But war hysteria
added to the economic pressure of competitors participated
in the area of fishing, small fruit farming and of the
the government & its policy of evacuation. The men were sent
to road camps, their families in many districts were evacuated
temporarily to the Exhibition buildings of Vancouver. An
area 100 miles wide along the coast line was declared a
defence area. Early in the spring the people started to be
moved to camps called Relocation centres beyond this area. At most
all the people were in these camps called Relocation centres
by the fall of 1942. This was almost completed by the Fall of 1942

My introduction to Camp life came in the summer of '44.
A friend had asked if I would go up to a girl's camp being
held near the centre of Tashme. It was about 120 miles
from Vancouver and I went. Within 24 hours of arriving
one of the leaders said - you know we need a High School
teacher. We have 150 students coming into the school
in September, 90 of them in grade 9 and no one to teach
the science. You have done work in science. won't
you come?" But, I said, I haven't my teaching certificate
with me. "Then
Surely you can get a better teacher." I would like you to see it in its
you want to come up to visit this isolated place. We have tried."
setting. Before I left that camp, having agreed to
return in September, I went up with the Camp baggage
to Tashme over a mountain road with the
even winding up,
rocky hillside rising high on one side and
a fast flowing stream pushing along in
the narrow valley many feet below. Then we
turned around the edge of a mt. & came
in sight of a valley about 2 miles by 2 miles.
Rows & rows of tiny tarpaper houses stood there. But
after the first one I saw was caught at once by the big beautiful
barns. It had been a pure bred dairy farm.
Now it housed about 2400 people of Japanese
origin.

As I walked down the gravel road I couldn't help but admire the neat tiny gardens in the 3' available in front of each house. Every house had a garden — without a weed. The bus was so crowded & took us on its first trip so a couple of hours and a half to wait. The minister went to get the key & the house from one of the old Church members. It was my first introduction & first generation Japanese. In Japanese Mr. S. said — Oh no, you don't want to make a cup of tea don't you. Instead we would like you to have supper with us. Andly made use good supper And brought out one of the very few of their jars of preserves Cherries canned & kept for special occasions. Such kindness on their farm before the war. was typical of these people too.

When the Dominion govt had taken over the care of these people it took over education. In B.C. free education goes to Jr. Matric with correspondence course for all who are unable to attend the regular schools. But the Dominion govt decided to give only public school educ. The Japanese people believe in education. Their own country is about 99% literate. They wanted their children to have H.S. The boys & girls found it boring to have no school. There was nothing around but the great mountains & woods. Their homes were crowded. They came to the minister and asked — "Can't the church do sg. about it?" The Women's Miss. Soc. met that need by sending in a miss. & to teach H.S. It expanded to 4 teachers with 180 students. No building was available in the daytime so school was from 3:30 - 9:30 except Saturday when we had dayschool. ↑ The Anglican church ran a much needed Kindergarten. Both the Meth. & Ang. had large Sunday schools. a Japanese service & an Eng. ch. service. The community spoke of us not by denom. but as the church or the King — as it should be.

In Jan '45 the U.S. declared that all the people of Japanese origin might go back to their homes on the coast. Hopes were rising that

Canada would follow this lead. Thus it was a great shock when one Friday in ~~January~~ March we found notice tacked on the ~~telephone~~ horse barn and other buildings stating ~~stating~~ that all who were 16 or over must in April declare before the R.C.M.P. their intention of staying in Canada, in which case they would be expected to go ~~to~~ instantance, or going to Japan. Condition for the latter were much more specific & apparently favourable than remaining in Canada.

I don't know whether you can grasp the feeling of fear, fear of the future, insecurity, and the power of rumours that so harassed camps such as these. From the outside you might be able to judge easily, but within the Camp, the isolation the restriction on travel the censorship of letters made cool collected decisions almost impossible. Many people had received notice to say that their property had been sold often at a fraction of its assessment value, perhaps a year before. Property, real & personal, left in good faith with the Custodian had in many cases been lost, stolen, or sold without the owner's knowledge or consent. This & many other factors including that of being unable to hold a job in B.C. unless one signed to go to Japan, led many to sign to go to Japan. Had no desire ~~or intention~~ to go to Japan.

Later, the courts took such a stand that ~~those~~ ~~it was so~~ these orders were not enforced - that is those who had signed for Japan were gradually allowed to last. However many ~~lost come to the end~~ though despair & bitterness felt they might as well go back to Japan & took advantage of the countries offer of transportation

If you could have seen & known the youngsters that were involved you would have seen almost no happy faces. They didn't want to go but finally gave in & their families & went. It was a sick at heart group of teen agers who went to Japan.

~~Some went~~ Those who came back are doing well on the whole. Many are working, some are finishing H.S. - at night school or day school. They are a group our country can be proud of ~~in spite of its treatment of them~~.

Some would say, "But what about those who went back, wasn't it a waste?" My answer would be a definite "no". Those who went back felt that the only thing that would make it livable would be to try & help Japan. Idealistic for teen agers? Yes but I think they are making a contribution there. Most of them are working for the Occupation Army because of their knowledge of English. They are homesick for Canada, for Canadian ways & want to come back. Some are hoping to go on with their education - by correspondence from Canada if no other way is open to them. Some living in smaller places have said how much they missed church & F.H. From other letters it is apparent that the young people are vitally interested in Christianity - & see if it has the answer for their country - so that Bible Classes are overflowing.

One girl writes - "There is not enough food & clothing out here. Even if you had enough money you just could not get enough clothing for them just isn't any to buy. - - - - - When I saw some of these poor hungry people I could not stand it & so I gave what I had to them." She was one of the poorest youngsters in the school. She wants very much to start a girls' club but working as a domestic servant in one of the American colonels' homes finds it difficult to get to know other girls.

Another H.S. boy writes: "In your letter you talk about courage. Yes, that is what we need out here. To all Japanese it is a fierce struggle to make a living more fierce than fighting another human being in a battle field. It's a fight to prove that righteousness & honesty will prove victory at the end. Most people don't know what's going to happen tomorrow. No security. But you know they determination & laughter in the air. That is people are taking their defeat in war as a lesson."

The Japanese Canadian people have found in the Church a friend in their time of need. People came east, with a bit of fear - fear that people might again, as one girl said, call 'Dirty Jap' down the street after me' but church people have given them friendship. It has meant a lot. Whenever most people from the camps they say again how grateful they are to the church for all it has done. I can't help thinking that the Displaced persons ~~new~~ immigrants from Europe must come with very much the same sense of ~~the~~, insecurity & fear & also determination to make good that our Japanese people came east & that the same friendship & help extended to them would help to make them feel at home and happy - a first requisite for good citizens.