

MEMORANDUM OF MEETING HELD Friday, December 18th at 10.45 a.m. to 12 noon at the City Hall with a Special Committee regarding Japanese Properties.

Present:

Alderman Buscombe - In the Chair.
Mr. Andrew Haggart - Representative of the Building Dept.
Mr. Lord - Legal Department.
Dr. Stewart Murray - Health Department.
Mr. G.W. McPherson
Mr. K.W. Wright
Mr. F.G. Shears

Some members of the Press were present.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting held on September 1st were read in which reference was made, that at that time evacuation was not complete, and a decision was arrived at to hold any drastic action in abeyance and to meet at a later date. The present meeting was convened for this purpose.

Alderman Buscombe stated that he understood evacuation was now complete and that while housing conditions were serious, he thought it was desirable for Japanese houses to be used to relieve this condition. The question was whether such houses could be brought up to standard.

He stated that he understood that we were renting Japanese property through Real Estate Agents and asked if tenants were being placed in Japanese buildings without the knowledge of the City Council. He was informed that it was our policy to advise the tenant to contact City departments in regard to repairs which were necessary, and in some cases the cost of such repairs was allowed as a deduction from rents.

Alderman Buscombe asked whether if once the tenants were in possession they might then refuse to carry out these repairs. He was informed that our present policy was to have the tenant deposit funds with us to cover the repairs agreed upon as assurance that the mechanics liens would be paid.

Mr. Haggart stated that to bring many of the premises up to present standard would not warrant the expense involved and that it would be false economy to do so. There was a Bye-law which provided that structural repairs would not be permitted if more than 30% of the assessed value of the property was required to be spent in bringing a property up to standard. Dr. Murray agreed with this and stated that many of the places were in terrible shape and at the present time they had placards on fourteen of them as "unfit for human habitation".

Alderman Buscombe referred to certain stores on Powell Street with windows boarded up and asked if any such stores could be used as dwelling places and he was informed that there were a number of cases where stores were now in use as dwellings.

Alderman Buscombe asked what our policy was regarding the disposal of Japanese property and could it not be sold in the same manner as the fishing vessels etc.

Mr. McPherson stated that this question involved a major policy. With regard to vessels, these were sold because they would quickly deteriorate and also because they were necessary to the fishing industry and that other items that had been sold were of a perishable

ishable nature, such as grocery stock etc. Mr. McPherson stated that an amount of enemy property was being sold but that it was not our policy to force liquidation with regard to evacuee owned property.

A question was asked regarding the disposition of revenues from Japanese properties which were rented and we stated that broadly speaking the interest on the mortgages was first paid, then taxes and insurance then creditors and the balance to the Japanese owner.

Mr. McPherson stated that it was not an easy matter to retain the Powell Street area as a commercial centre because while previously Japanese had used that as a shopping district, any new white tenants would ^{not} be so likely to do so but in the main would use stores in other sections of the city.

The question was asked if a Japanese could re-lease and he was informed that he could not do so without our consent.

Mr. McPherson stated that in the Powell Street and adjacent area there were about 240 Japanese owned properties and that about 170 had already been rented or leased by this department.

Alderman Buscombe again stated that he thought it would be an excellent time to get rid of all Japanese properties and that he sincerely hoped that Japanese would not be allowed to return and Mr. McPherson intimated that this was of course a matter of general policy which was outside the jurisdiction of this local office and for the present we could only sell with the consent of the Japanese owner and that we were administering his property as Trustees.

The matter of small additions, woodsheds and shacks having been built by the Japanese was mentioned. Alderman Buscombe asked if there was any Bye-law giving their department authority that such additional buildings be removed. There seemed to be some doubt as to what authority the city had in regard to this matter. Apparently the standards required for the erection of new buildings could not be made retroactive.

Mr. McPherson asked if, in view of the fact that liquidation had been suggested by Alderman Buscombe, whether the Committee had any views as to what should be done to this area in the event of liquidation being made a Government policy, as he would like to know what they had in mind so that he might be in a position to make some statement on his return to Ottawa.

After some discussion it was suggested that in view of this district's proximity to waterfront and railway, that it should be made an industrial area.

The poor condition of many of the properties was again referred to and Mr. McPherson made it very plain that if the City authorities condemned any particular building, either on structural grounds or because of fire or health hazards, that our department would act on such authority. It was stated that this had already been done in some cases and the opinion was very freely expressed that the Custodian's office here had co-operated in a very fine manner.

In this connection Mr. Lord stated that it would be the policy to survey each place and if necessary establish their legal rights and report to us what was required to be done, and he felt sure that we would co-operate as we had already done in the past.

Alderman Buscombe asked whether it would not be possible for revenues from Japanese properties to be put in what he termed a "Jack pot" and poor properties renovated out of such funds. Mr. McPherson stated that it would not be possible to use the revenues from the property of one Japanese owner in order to repair poor property of another Japanese owner. Alderman Buscombe could not see why this could not be done and Mr. McPherson further pointed out

That the matter would not be so simple as stated as among other things there would be the question of creditors of the Japanese whose revenues were being used for fixing up other Japanese property.