

“Better to Let Sell Off Own Stock”

McPherson Explains Why Many Jap Stores Open

It is better to allow a Japanese merchant to sell off his own stock rather than to place a white custodian in his business to do the job — which explains why many Japanese stores are still open in Vancouver.

So said Glenn W. McPherson, custodian of enemy property in British Columbia, in an address to the Junior Board of Trade at luncheon Thursday.

Mr McPherson pointed out that a large percentage of the goods now in stock in Japanese stores is saleable only to the Japanese people themselves. Furthermore, the merchant has his own set of customers to whom he can sell this stock, and liquidation can be more speedily completed by the owner himself.

He said that his department is anxious to see that the Japanese receive a fair price for the sale of their property. Money gained from such sales can be used to re-establish the owners in non-defence areas where they will not be a burden upon the taxpayers.

DEFINITION OF “ENEMY”

Mr. McPherson said that much debate had arisen over the interpretation of the word “enemy” as included in the Federal legislation dealing with enemy property.

The most workable definition, he said, is to consider every Japanese walking the streets of a Canadian city as a British subject and to consider every Canadian walking the streets of an enemy country and an “enemy”, from a technical standpoint at least.

Mr McPherson explained this anomaly thus:

“We assume that every Japanese walking the streets is loyal. If he isn’t, the RCMP should have interned him, and that’s none of our business.

“If he is regarded as an enemy, then he must starve, since it is against the law to trade with the enemy. This means that we have to support every person we define as an enemy.

“VERY GOOD REASON”

“Every person in a Canadian internment camp is defined for the purposes of the act as an enemy, and his property comes under the care of the custodian.

“Mayor Houde is therefore an enemy, and the Japanese who is not interned is not an enemy.

“There is a very good reason why we should regard all Canadians in enemy hands as our enemies.

“Once they are defined as enemies, their property comes under the care of the custodian. This prevents the enemy from extracting funds from Canadians under duress.

“If the Canadian in Japan was defined as a British subject, then the Japanese could force him to transfer his Canadian funds in the currency of a neutral country and thence into Japanese currency.”

V. Ben Williams, president of the Vancouver Junior Board of Trade, presented Mr. McPherson with an honor certificate to testify the fact that he was recently chosen by Future Magazine as one of the 10 outstanding young men of America.

Excerpt from ““Better to Let Sell Off Own Stock”: McPherson Explains Why Many Jap Stores Open,” Vancouver Sun, 24 July 1942.