

Mr. JAKUES: Is it part of the Geneva convention that prisoners of war should remain prisoners of war twelve months or more after the end of the war?

Mr. MITCHELL: You would have had very little sugar in western Canada in the last two or three years if it had not been for prisoners of war. We are moving them out, and we expect all to leave Canada by November 2. Great Britain is still using prisoners of war, tens of thousands of them.

Mr. BLACKMORE: I think the Minister of Labour has no criticism coming to him because of what he has done with respect to these prisoners of war. If I were a prisoner I think I would feel a whole lot happier in Canada where I could get plenty to eat and be warm and well housed, and I would not be crowding the minister to rush me back home even after November 2. We have to face these things reasonably.

I should like to say a word or two about the treatment of the Japanese. I want to commend the minister for the way in which he conducted the evacuation of the Japanese from British Columbia. After the danger is all over and men do not smell the powder and are not afraid of the zooming of aeroplanes over their head at midnight, it is easy to look back and criticize. But what the minister did in those trying days was highly commendable; he deserves praise for it, and I want to give him praise.

Now a word or two with respect to the way in which he has disposed of the Japanese since, and I want this to go into the record because it is to the minister's credit. He has not been free to do the thing which in his judgment and the judgment of the government was the wise thing to do with these Japanese, because he has been interfered with by a whole lot of people passing resolutions and running up and down the country, the very people who would have been, to use a slang expression, "howling their heads off" when the trouble was on if anything different had been done and who are now shedding crocodile tears because we are not treating the Japanese as though we had never been at war with Japan. That arouses in me nothing but disgust and contempt. I deeply sympathize with the minister in his endeavour to deal with this problem. I deeply sympathize with him in his endeavour to deal with the labour problem all the way through. I say this for the record: I think the minister has done a good job; I doubt mightily that any other man in the dominion could have done any better, and perhaps no man could have been found who would have done as well as the Minister of Labour has done. I am not

[Mr. Mitchell.]

in favour of the way in which matters are being dealt with in some respects under the Department of Labour, but the Minister of Labour is not to blame for any deficiencies that appear. I wish to put that on the record so that it will stay to the minister's credit as long as *Hansard* will be read.

Mr. IRVINE: I have no objection to the compliment paid by my hon. friend to the efficiency of the Minister of Labour. In fact, in certain instances I would add something to it. But when he is making his comments so glowingly I do not think he should imply discredit to any other member of this house. I presume he was referring to the hon. member for Vancouver East as weeping crocodile tears over the Japanese people. If he was, he was expressing his ignorance of that hon. gentleman's attitude for many years and even before the war. Whatever may be the rights or wrongs of the affair it does appear to me that the hon. member for Vancouver East has stood firm on a clear course throughout the whole episode. I believe he is substantially right when he says that injustices were done to these Japanese, and perhaps we could hardly expect otherwise in view of the war psychology. While they have been treated as they have been treated in Canada it may be some consolation for us to know that they have been treated much worse in other countries, but on the other hand there is no question about the justice of the position which the hon. member for Vancouver East has always upheld in this house.

Mr. BLACKMORE: I am glad that the hon. member for Cariboo was honest enough to make his criticism in my presence so that I might have a chance to defend myself. Other people would have gone out and prattled all over the country. I prefaced my remarks with a statement that clearly showed that I had reference to groups of people in Canada who have taken it upon themselves to interfere with the Minister of Labour and the government by running up and down the country and passing resolutions on what they consider to be the wise way in which to deal with an exceedingly dangerous problem.

Mr. KNOWLES: Name the groups.

Mr. BLACKMORE: There is no need.

Mr. KNOWLES: The United Church?

Mr. BLACKMORE: I deliberately left the groups unnamed. I should not be surprised if the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre would rush in and place on *Hansard* the names of a whole lot of people