

*Supply—Japanese Nationals*

of persons of Japanese origin in areas in Canada other than the defence coast area. It is understandable that until dispersal is completed or, nearly completed, restriction on the return to the coast area should be in effect. But to have the same restrictions practically in effect in every other part of Canada is not understandable. Let me show the committee how these restrictions operate. A Canadian Japanese living in Saskatchewan had recently to go to Nova Scotia to be admitted to the bar of that province, but before he could move from Saskatchewan, where he is in a responsible position in the civil service, he had to get a permit from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Surely such restrictions do not make sense. Remember, this man is a Canadian. He tried his best to get into the Canadian army or into to some other branch of the armed service, but because of the prejudice against him he was unsuccessful. Now he is working as a trusted employee of a government of this country, and in order to be admitted to the bar of another province and to take whatever oath lawyers take he has to get a permit from the mounted police. This applies to every person of Japanese origin moving from one province to another. These restrictions should be completely removed except as regards the return of persons to Pacific defence area.

Then there is the question of disposal of the property which belonged to these people when they were evacuated in 1942, property which it took some of them a lifetime to build up. This is a parliament that believes in private property. The property was taken from these people and sold for a song. I could give a number of instances of what they received out of a lifetime's hard work. Something should be done about it. An application was made to the exchequer court in 1943. This is 1946, and that application has not yet been heard. During this session we have heard a lot about the rights guaranteed to us under magna charta. I understand that one of the assertions in that document is, that rights delayed are rights denied. The courts may be slow, but I suggest to this committee that the courts of Canada are not so slow that they cannot find time to deal with these cases over a period of three years. In August, 1943, the solicitors representing these evacuees made application to the exchequer court, and it is still there. Only God and the exchequer court know when it will be heard. I suggest to the committee that that is not justice to Canadians.

There are a number of other petty restrictions which should be removed at once. Up to a certain point the United States followed

[Mr. MacInnis.]

the same procedure with respect to the removal of Japanese from the coast area as we did, but they have appointed a commission to investigate the loss of property. Let me draw a parallel which is perhaps not a parallel in all respects. At the beginning of the war certain organizations were banned and classed as illegal organizations. Their property was confiscated. One of these organizations was the Farmer-Labour Temple Association. This association had property all across Canada. There was no question that at the time it was an illegal organization under the Defence of Canada Regulations. After Russia was invaded and came into the war on the side of the allies a cry went up for the restoration of this property to the former owners. A commission was appointed, and while I have not the actual facts before me at the moment, I believe that certain of these properties were bought back from the people to whom they were sold by the government at more than what was received for them and returned to these organizations. I am not objecting to the procedure followed, but I tell the committee that the sale of the property of Canadians of Japanese origin who were removed from British Columbia was far less justified than was what was done in the case of these organizations declared illegal at the beginning of the war. Therefore, I believe a commission should be appointed to see that justice is done in the matter. Advantage should not be taken of the fact that these people are of a different ethnic origin to ourselves, different colour of skin and so on. Let us deal with the matter as we would deal with any other Canadian, and I suggest it be done without the pressure which was provided in the case I have referred to.

Mr. MITCHELL: My hon. friend will agree that when it comes to freedom of the individual I do not take second place to any man in the house or in the country. I refer to the basic principles of freedom in its broadest sense. In the administration of a dispersal policy of this kind you must have a controlled movement under which that policy is completed. What my department has endeavoured to do in the best interest of the Japanese themselves is to disperse them across the country, and, if humanly possible, to prevent a concentration of them in any particular locality. By about Christmas or not long afterwards we hope we shall have the whole situation pretty well stabilized.

With respect to the property, that does not come under my department; it comes under the Secretary of State, the custodian of enemy alien property.