

*War Appropriation—Labour*

Mr. MacINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I am afraid that after that flesh-creeping speech, what I have to say will sound rather tame. We are now considering the item in the appropriation to care for persons of Japanese origin who were moved from the defence area of the Pacific coast following the declaration of war between Canada and Japan. I agree with the other hon. members who have spoken on this question that although for many years the question of the orientals in Canada—and this is only one phase of it—was almost altogether a question for the province of British Columbia, it is not any longer so, it is now a question for the Dominion of Canada. One of the things which the other provinces can do if they want to be helpful in this situation is to assist the government and the people of Canada to find a solution. It is not going to be easy to find a solution.

I want to congratulate the minister upon the manner in which he has handled this very difficult problem. A great deal more might perhaps have been done, but taking the situation by and large, with all the difficulties that surrounded it, I think the minister and the British Columbia security commission have made as good a job as could be expected. Perhaps the matter could have been more easily handled if the clearing station which was at Hastings Park had been put outside the defence area at the beginning. However, it might have been difficult to find an appropriate place, and that was not done. Nothing further need be said about it now.

Because this is a question which must be decided on principles, principles I believe such as are laid down in the Atlantic charter, the first thing I am going to do is to make my own position clear and definite beyond the possibility of a doubt either in this house, in my own province or anywhere in Canada.

Canada is at war with Japan. Canada is also at war with Germany and Italy. I see no reason why we should deal with the population of Japanese origin among us any differently from the way in which we deal with those of German and Italian extraction. If we deal with them differently—and we have done so—we do it on account of racial prejudice. So far as I have been able to ascertain: so far as anything that has been said in this house is concerned, the population of Japanese origin in the Dominion of Canada has been just as loyal as any other section of the people; and note this, no other section of the people has been treated in the way that these people have been treated. They have indicated their loyalty and their Canadianism

[Mr. Neill.]

in many ways. They have indicated their loyalty and Canadianism by their willingness to enlist. Very few of them, however, were allowed to get into the armed forces. They have indicated their loyalty by their willingness to work and to produce, and they have indicated their loyalty by cooperation with the government in the difficult task of evacuation from the Pacific coast. So far as I know, there has been no sabotage. There have been no subversive acts. I thought it was rather unkind of the hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Reid) last evening in his speech, with a great deal of which I agree, to say, in mentioning that there had been no sabotage, that "perhaps" the time is not ripe. They are damned if they commit subversive acts, because there is no doubt then of their disloyalty; but when they do not commit sabotage or subversive acts, then it is not right to say that possibly the time is not ripe. Let us take the fact that the act was not committed as evidence that there was no intention to commit it. That is what we would expect in regard to ourselves, and I think it is part of the Christian creed that we should do to others as we would have them do to us. In the same way, we should think of others as we would like to have them think of us.

I said they were not allowed to enlist, and the reason for that is not one that Canada can be very proud of. They were not allowed to enlist because it was feared that their services to the country would strengthen their claims for the full rights of citizenship after this war was over. The hon. member for Vancouver South (Mr. Green) referred to certain steps that were taken to stop Asiatic immigration. We do not refer to Asiatic immigration now. We do not refer to the oriental question. We merely refer to the Japanese question. Why? Because we are at war with Japan. But after the war the whole question of the oriental population of British Columbia will be there just as it was there before the war began, and we cannot divide it now into watertight compartments. The hon. member for Vancouver South referred to steps taken to stop Asiatic immigration. He referred to what was done in 1923, the Chinese Exclusion Act, and he also referred to the bill introduced in 1933 by the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Neill). I was wondering how he overlooked the resolution introduced by myself in 1936. That resolution was very explicit. It was debated in this house for at least a part of two sessions. I will read it:

Whereas it is detrimental to the best interests of Canada that there should be in the country