

been debated on many previous occasions, on most of which I have taken part, and there can be no doubt as to where I stand on the question. If we were to look back over the record, I doubt whether we should find a statement better and more clearly made and more comprehensive than that made this evening by the hon. member for Vancouver South. It was entirely fair in that it did not in any sense magnify facts out of their proper bearing. The reason why I rose at all this evening is that I do trust that this debate will not end until the government has made a plain statement with regard to its policy of the future of the Japanese.

I make that plea for this reason, that I represent a riding in the centre of the southern part of British Columbia. Perhaps hon. members will imagine a map of British Columbia suspended from the gallery, and draw a stripe of 100 miles wide down the Pacific coast, which would represent the protected area out of which these 24,000 Japanese were moved, and then will visualize the fact that directly after the treachery of Pearl Harbor some of these Japanese started creeping and seeping out of that area, before ever the British Columbia security commission got into the saddle, and landed into the three ridings which border that stripe—the southern part of Cariboo, the riding of Kamloops, and the constituency of Yale which I represent. I want to endeavour to impress upon the minister the fact that the feeling of anxiety which exists in the minds of the people of the southern part of British Columbia is but a natural one. In the central portion only of the Okanagan valley we had 500 Japanese residents long before Pearl Harbor. When the seepers came in, before the security commission got into the saddle, something like another 500 hived up with the original 500, so that we have a thousand Japanese. On top of that, about six weeks ago a few more entered that central portion as a result of permits which were issued, against the wishes of the population, by the security commission for Japanese to come in and labour.

The people in that interior part look on this question somewhat in this way. From the protected area the 24,000 Japanese have been removed. We have a thousand in the centre of the Okanagan. Far and away the majority of those 24,000 are still in British Columbia, and the 6,000 odd that have been sent across the Rocky mountains into other provinces have been sent in under agreements with the provincial governments, each of which contains the understanding that those who come shall also be sent away. The clause in the agreement has been quoted here this evening. So

that the people in my part of British Columbia look at it in this way. The protected area has been emptied, and it has been emptied into our part of southern British Columbia. The voice of the inhabitants of the protected area is stridently in favour of declining ever to see these Japanese go back into the protected area. They realize the time will come when those who have gone into the other provinces will be removed from those provinces. Is it unnatural of them to ask, well, where will all these Japanese go? In the earlier part of the existence of the British Columbia security commission the commission made no bones about it whatever that the most convenient place to get rid of these Japanese from the protected area was to let them settle as soon as they got outside the edge of it, namely in the Okanagan valley and the riding of Kamloops and the riding of Cariboo, and the inhabitants of that part, agricultural land as it is, have no intention whatever of agreeing placidly to the return of the Japanese there.

There must be a solution which will deal with this matter once and for all. For at least twenty-five years it has been so great a difficulty to the province of British Columbia. That is well illustrated by the speech of the hon. member for Vancouver South. The dominion government once, twice, three times, four times prevented the carrying out of these actions that British Columbia decided to take. Let it be recognized at last that this is not a British Columbia question; it is a Canadian question, and if we are to have unity within Canada we must settle the Japanese question this time once and for all.

Mr. REID: There are one or two questions I should like to ask the minister.

Mr. MITCHELL: If I could reply in a general way to some of the observations, and then have the questions after, that might be satisfactory. I am going to be very brief, in view of the lateness of the evening.

In connection with the policy of the government having to do with the removal of the Japanese from the protected areas in British Columbia, my mind goes back a little over a year, when the responsibility for that movement was placed in the hands of the Department of Labour. I think it may be fairly said that in view of the apprehension on the British Columbia coast the Department of Labour has moved with expedition, and might I say, on behalf of the British Columbia security commission, has performed a satisfactory job under very difficult circumstances.

Some criticism has been voiced of certain members of the British Columbia commission.