

Adjournment Debate

The Royal Commission exonerated the custodians office which is to say that it did the job it was told to do. What a job that was. There has been no apology, no remorse, no recognition of the injustice which was done. I note also that the Canadian judicial system failed utterly to redress the wrongs.

● (2305)

In the United States, Japanese Americans were able to get some relief. It was inadequate, but there was some relief. In Canada, these people had no rights once the War Measures Act was declared. Legal action in Canada was confined to the period after the War Measures Act and, indeed, well after the War. Interestingly, it was the last appeal to the Privy Council in the United Kingdom on certain deportation orders which ended that history of appeal. I am sorry to say that the Privy Council failed rather miserably. It did not even allow the modest exception which our timid Supreme Court of Canada would have. This happened to be the first case which was decided in the new Supreme Court of Canada Buildings. It was certainly not a good beginning for that Court.

Since World War II, Japanese Canadians have become an integral part of Canadian society. Many have played a very special role as the conscience of Canada in the peace movement. We cannot forget, and, indeed, I believe it is relevant to the discussion before us now on the treatment of Japanese Canadians here in Canada that it was on Japan that the first two atomic bombs were exploded. I regret to say it was the same Mackenzie King who authorized the internment of Japanese Canadians in 1942, who also said it was fortunate that the bombs were used on the Japanese rather than on the white races of Europe.

Concrete proposals have been made for \$50 million to be given to a foundation which would in turn make particular reparation and otherwise use the money for the promotion of racial harmony and human rights. Good projects have been proposed and this seems to be an eminently reasonable approach. Certainly, the Minister of Justice should continue consultations with appropriate organizations and individuals and come back to Parliament with a firm proposal. One requirement for the building of a better society is to admit frankly the mistakes of the past and seek to redress the harm done. Justice must be done to Canadians of Japanese ancestry and it is the responsibility of the Minister of Justice to take the next step.

Mr. Al MacBain (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice): Madam Speaker, there is no question that one of the more striking episodes in our history is that of the treatment of Japanese-Canadians during the Second World War. During that war, Japanese-Canadians were detained in transfer centres and internment camps pursuant to regulations made under the War Measures Act, and their property was seized and their loyalty to Canada was questioned. In Canada, compensation for property losses suffered by about 1,300 persons was paid in 1950, in the amount of approximately \$1.2 million, following an examination of the claims of Japanese-Canadians by a Commission headed by Mr. Justice Bird

between 1947 and 1950. The procedures for submitting claims were widely publicized at the time and the awards of compensation were made after careful examination of the legal and factual basis of each case.

As the Minister indicated in his answer before this House on June 9, 1983, this matter is indeed under consideration by the Government at this time. This is a complex matter. Claims other than those based on infringement of property rights would be particularly complicated, both factually and legally, and especially having regard to the considerable passage of time. The fact that the events took place so long ago makes it difficult to identify them, quantify them and redress them in a manner which balances all the legal and equitable interests at stake. There are no simple solutions to the claims of those interned during the war.

Japanese-Canadians will be holding a conference in the fall during which they will discuss their position with respect to these issues. The Government will be very interested in learning of the proposals presented at this conference, as the wish of Japanese-Canadians regarding the events of the war must necessarily be an important factor in determining what form of reparative action might be appropriate in the circumstances.

SUPPLY AND SERVICES—PERCENTAGE OF PROCUREMENT FROM MANITOBA SUPPLIERS. (B) REQUEST THAT MANITOBA ORDERS BE INCREASED

Hon. Jake Epp (Provencher): Madam Speaker, on June 16, as recorded at page 26438 of *Hansard*, I asked a question of the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Blais) relative to the procurement policy of that Department. That Department had issued figures as to the amount of goods and services it had purchased from various Provinces of Canada.

● (2310)

For some period of time it has been the stated policy of the Government that the procurement of goods and services should be more equitably distributed across the country, a goal which the Government has stated and one which has been accepted by Members of the House. The Government stands condemned by its own figures. Its released figures would show that of contracts worth approximately \$5 billion, the following purchase percentages apply: for Atlantic Canada, 7 per cent, for the two Provinces of Ontario and Quebec, 77 per cent and for the West, 15 per cent. Specifically for the Province of Manitoba, which was the focus of my question, the Government's own figures show that only 3.7 per cent of total procurement contracts by the Department of Supply and Services have been issued for suppliers and business people in the Province. The Government gives lip service to a procurement policy which is to be equitable and fairly distributed to all Provinces and to all regions, but its own figures would indicate that those are words only.

In defence, the Government states, "Those are past figures. The next figures will be better". How many times have we heard that the next figures will be better, that we are doing