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*“Due to their keenness regarding education,
they will get the utmost out of the whole plan.”¹*

THE EDUCATION OF JAPANESE CHILDREN IN THE BRITISH COLUMBIA INTERIOR HOUSING SETTLEMENTS DURING WORLD WAR TWO*

Patricia E. Roy

In 1942 the federal government ordered the evacuation of all persons of Japanese racial origin from the coast of British Columbia; the province rejected any responsibility for educating the children. Despite the concern of the Japanese for education, only one was a qualified teacher with experience in the British Columbia public schools. Nevertheless, with minimal assistance from the federal government, which was anxious to have them move east of the Rocky Mountains, “their keenness regarding education” allowed teachers and students in the interior housing settlements to get “the utmost” out of the elementary schools set up for them during the war years.

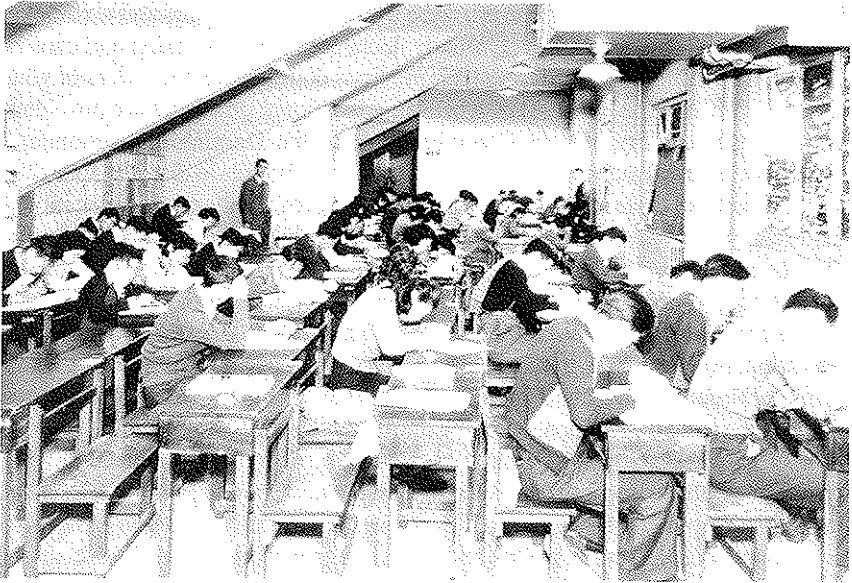
Before the war, Japanese children had such well-deserved reputations as intelligent and hard-working students in British Columbia’s public schools that when a recent immigrant took first place in the province-wide high school entrance examinations some observers fretted that the “yellow peril” was not “yellow battleships nor yellow settlers, but yellow intelligence.”² Municipal school trustees complained about the cost of educating Japanese children while admitting their ready adoption of Canadian customs. At the same time, over the protests of the children, some controversy within the Japanese community,³ and suspicions of whites that they taught “a flood of jingoistic nationalism,”⁴ Japanese-language schools operated after public school or on Saturdays wherever there was a significant Japanese population.

Given their interest in education, it is not surprising that a significant proportion of the Japanese went to high school and to university even though their entry to the professions was limited. A few *Nisei* graduated from the Provincial Normal School, but only one, Hideko Hyodo, was employed by a public school board. She had a first-class certificate and from September 1926 until the spring of 1942 taught an all-Japanese Grade 1 class at Lord Byng School in Steveston.⁵



BCSC Hastings Park Clearing Station, Vancouver, B.C., 15 July 1942: building "L," school. Leonard Frank, National Archives of Canada, C-24454

For several weeks in the spring of 1942, Miss Hyodo taught at Steveston and then "rush[ed] out to Hastings Park"⁶ where she voluntarily organized twelve people teaching 261 students in Grades 1 to 3. These children had been gathered with their families from points outside greater Vancouver pending their removal to interior points. After the evacuees began arriving, the British Columbia Security Commission (BCSC),⁷ the federal agency established to look after the evacuation, "borrowed" W.S. McRae from the Vancouver School Board to supervise recreation and education. His specific instructions, he recounted, were "to go as far as I liked provided that it didn't cost the Commission any money."⁸ In such circumstances, the classes at Hastings Park depended on volunteer teachers—chiefly missionaries and evacuees with high school or university education. To train the Japanese assistants, McRae and his associates set up



BCSC Hastings Park Clearing Station, Vancouver, B.C., 15 July 1942: building "L," school.
Leonard Frank, National Archives of Canada, C-27426

teacher-leadership" classes, invited prominent local educators to give lectures, and arranged visits to the Model School of the Vancouver Normal School.

The civil servants in the BCSC persuaded their political masters that educating children in the interior housing settlements was "a matter of fairness to the future of the children" and "in the national interest" since it would help with "their assimilation into normal Canadian community life after the war."⁹ In practical terms, the Commission staff expected the schools to improve morale, reduce the likelihood of juvenile delinquency, give families a certain amount of security so that fathers of school-age children would feel easier about leaving for outside employment,¹⁰ and assuage the Spanish Consul who, acting as the Protecting Power for Japan, had made embarrassing inquiries about education.¹¹

The BCSC, however, wanted minimal involvement in education. It refused any responsibility for schooling beyond Grade 8 and wherever possible it sought to have others educate approximately 4,000 children of elementary age.¹² It persuaded Alberta and Manitoba to accept evacuee children into public schools in return for assistance with the cost; similarly, it accepted the offers of the Roman Catholic and United Churches to provide schooling at the Greenwood, B.C. settlement in return for some financial assistance and minimal supervision. Later, it accepted offers from those churches and the Anglicans to operate kindergarten and high school classes.

In British Columbia, where most evacuees resided, the BCSC believed the province should be responsible since as "Canadian citizens...they [the Japanese]

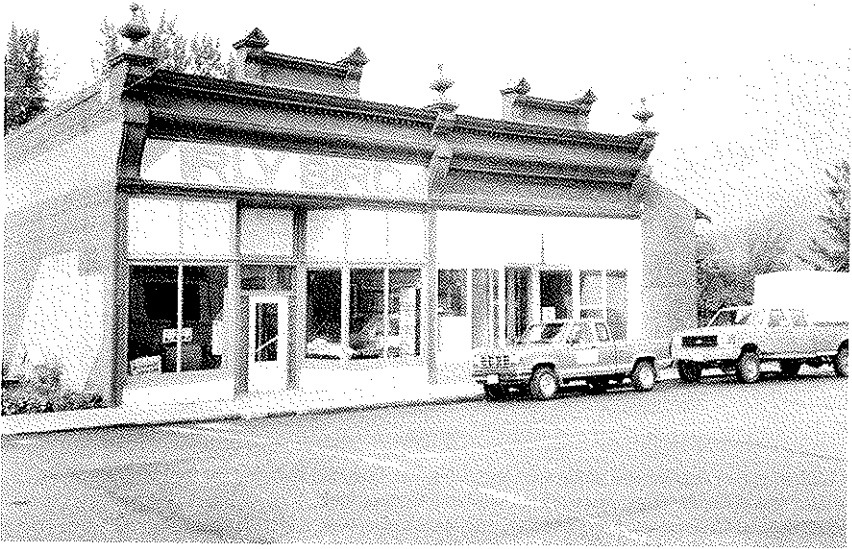
are entitled to their education, by Government grant or otherwise."¹³ At the very least, the Commission hoped the province would pay for teachers and textbooks. The provincial cabinet, however, bluntly declared: "The education and care of the Japanese children moved from their previous domicile, on the orders of your Commission, and the total cost of whatever educational privileges are provided, are the responsibility of your Commission or of the Dominion government." Moreover, the provincial cabinet decided that school boards in districts receiving independent Japanese settlers were not obliged to provide them with educational facilities. Under pressure from the prime minister, including a "veiled threat of disallowance," and an appeal not to add to the "heavy responsibility" of the federal government in wartime, the province did not amend the Public Schools Act to forbid local school boards to accept Japanese students. Provincial co-operation, however, was minimal. Despite a direct appeal from federal Labour Minister Humphrey Mitchell to Premier John Hart for the "advice and assistance of the experienced educational administrators in your Department of Education" to help give "these young Canadian subjects a proper British education," the province would do no more than sell copies of elementary correspondence school lessons, textbooks, and school supplies at cost. Reluctantly, it loaned answers to correspondence lesson exercises and examinations so the Commission might mimeograph and distribute them to its teachers.¹⁴

By the time the new school year began, in September 1942, evacuation to the interior housing settlements was almost complete. Several West Kootenay communities, namely Sandon, New Denver, Kaslo, and Greenwood, were developed around declining mining towns where the new residents were largely housed in rehabilitated buildings. In the three settlements at Slocan (Bay Farm, Popoff Farm, and Lemon Creek) and at the brand-new community of Tashme, fourteen miles east of Hope, the Commission had to construct many new buildings. Housing was the priority.

The lack of schooling concerned parents. By early October the Commission noted "a great deal of unrest...due to the lack of information regarding the educational programme to be followed." Before opening the schools, the Commission informed parents that it would "solely" dictate "the educational program," that the Japanese school supervisors were responsible to it, and that all teaching would be in English.¹⁵

Such warnings were necessary because some evacuees, believed to be sympathetic to Japan, had tried "to assume certain responsibilities in connection with the schools." Subsequently, in several instances, parents demanded a say in the appointment of teachers and, at Tashme, protested the dismissal of a popular principal. Yet, even at Tashme where the community was divided on many issues, parents set aside their "petty complaints and dissatisfactions, when the subject revolves around education."¹⁶ The BCSC encouraged the formation of Parent-Teachers Associations which it hoped would organize sports days and similar activities and raise money to purchase library books, sports equipment, and other extras. A few schools were disappointed by apparent indifference when

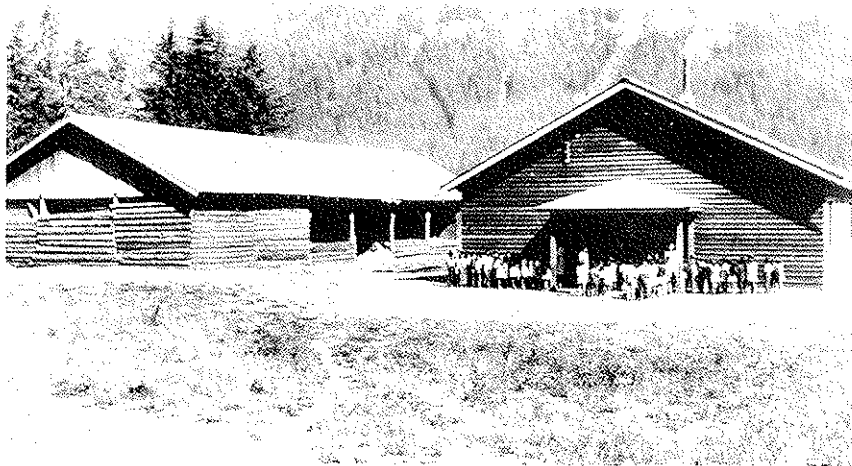
few parents attended Open Houses. At most, however, parents attended PTA meetings regularly, asked "intelligent questions," and co-operated in improving discipline in and around the schools.



Giegerich Building, Kaslo. Subdivided into classrooms during relocation.
Photograph courtesy of Jean Visser and J.D. Wilson; July 1991

Because the availability of physical facilities varied from community to community, the schools did not open simultaneously. In Kaslo, one of the first "ghost towns" to be settled,¹⁷ school started in temporary quarters in September.¹⁸ At Tashme and Slocan, construction delays meant classes did not begin until early 1943, and then some classes operated on shifts because of overcrowding. The number of classes varied from four at Rosebery to twenty-seven at Tashme.

The BCSC had feared jealousy if it provided better conditions or services than were available to nearby white children. It had no worries on this account insofar as its classrooms were concerned. None was ideal. Lighting was often poor, blackboards were inadequate in quality and number, and poor partitions made classrooms noisy. The worst situation was at Tashme where the heating in the main school building, the upper storey of a renovated barn, was so poor that the medical health officer ordered that children be sent home if the temperature fell below 56°F.¹⁹ Although the BCSC gradually improved the physical facilities, one of its officials complained that doing so made "it just that much tougher...in getting these families moved elsewhere."²⁰



Children gather outside one of the school buildings at Tashme. Keeping the buildings warm in winter was difficult. The adjacent shed was used to store fuel.
UBC Special Collections, Margaret Sage Hayward Collection.

Unlike its American counterpart, which had the advice and assistance of professional educators who saw the relocation camps as an opportunity for experiments in creating a curriculum that would provide “an effective instrument of community planning and building” leading to “democracy in action,”²¹ the BCSC simply adopted the existing British Columbia curriculum. That had practical advantages. Most students and their neophyte teachers were familiar with it, textbooks were available, and provincial elementary correspondence lessons provided guides beyond the prescribed texts and workbooks.

The curriculum also conformed to the belief of some officials of the BCSC that one of their objectives was to promote a Canadian identity among its students. At the first Summer School for teachers, Howard Pammett of the federal Department of Labour, which was responsible for the BCSC, told student teachers to remember “that you are teaching young children to be Canadians, future citizens of this vast rich country...”²² Summer School instructors helped “lead pupils to think and talk and act as Canadians.” Thus, for example, the Health and Physical Education instructor arranged his course to improve the “everyday patterns of living” of the student-teachers so they “would more closely conform to that of the ideal for Canadian youth, so that they, possessing some ideals, might guide their Japanese pupils in the same pattern.”²³

Patriotism to Canada formally entered the Social Studies curriculum in the intermediate grades where one aim of History and Citizenship was "to cultivate an intelligent patriotism without national vanity and arrogance."²⁴ Social Studies had a strong Canadian content as did the *Highroads to Reading* readers which were used from Grades 1 through 6. Most readers included selections of patriotic readings under such headings as "The Land of the Maple," "The Canadian Scene," and "This Fair Dear Land." The geography of Canada was a major area of study in Grades 5 through 8. In History, Grade 7 and 8 students who read the chapters on B.C. by Arthur Anstey that were appended to their Canadian history text learned that the presence of Orientals "constitutes a social and economic problem...[that]...will need to be solved by wise and patient effort."²⁵

Except for "Orientals" and others who lacked full civil rights, the rhetoric of the B.C. curriculum was as democratic in its aims as anything devised by American educators. "The people of a democratic state such as Canada," proclaimed the *Programme of Studies*, published in 1941, "wish to have citizens able to play their part in a democratic state, but able also to make new adjustments in an evolving and progressive social order, so that social stability may be united with social progress."²⁶ One exercise in Burt's *The Romance of Canada*, a text used in Grades 7 and 8, was a drawing of the steps "in the progress the people made toward responsible government."²⁷ For children whose parents and teachers could not vote, the lessons must have been ironic.

Because of a severe teacher shortage in British Columbia,²⁸ the BCSC never considered the practice of its American counterpart, the War Relocation Authority, of recruiting a large number of Caucasian teachers.²⁹ The Commission planned only to hire Miss Hyodo, an assistant, and fourteen supervisors who would be qualified teachers or high school or university students who had had some teacher training at Hastings Park. These paid supervisors would look after books and supplies and organize "a voluntary staff of Japanese High School and University students" to help in coaching or teaching the younger children.³⁰ The prospective coaches or teachers, however, insisted on being paid. But there was a saving. The teachers' salaries were included in their families' incomes; what the Commission paid out in salaries, it largely saved in maintenance or welfare allowances.³¹ The proposed salaries were so low that few university students or graduates accepted teaching positions. By the time the schools were operating, Miss Hyodo was being paid \$75; Miss Hidaka, \$65;³² the principals of the eight schools, \$55; and the assistant teachers, \$40 or \$45.³³ Early in 1944, because of its dependence on Hyodo and Hidaka, the Commission recommended raising their salaries to \$100 and \$75 respectively and those of the principals of the three largest schools to \$60. The teachers generally accepted their salaries as given but early in 1944 when some of the \$40 teachers at Tashme were denied a five-dollar raise, seven of them, inspired by their parents and the Japanese Committee in Tashme, possibly as part of a larger factional dispute within the settlement, submitted their resignations. The resignations were not accepted and,

in due course, a new salary scale was worked out based on experience and attendance at summer schools rather than on "actual teaching merit."³⁴

The Commission believed it could not "throw the whole burden of administering the education of 2,800 children" upon Hyodo and Hidaka and thought a serious weakness of its schools was the lack of "any experienced white educational administrators."³⁵ It also feared criticism that by "employing all Japanese teachers and a Japanese Educational Director, we are giving these children a Japanese rather than a Canadian education."³⁶ But without the co-operation of the provincial government, the Commission could not find a suitable person to take the job on a permanent basis nor could it find white supervisors. Thus Hyodo, who was based in New Denver, or her assistant, Hidaka, visited all the schools on a quarterly basis. Because of problems at Tashme, Hidaka, who was based there, could seldom travel.

To assist them, the BCSC hired retired public school teachers as part-time advisors. The first of these, Miss Ella Robertson of Vancouver, visited the Commission schools for a month in the spring of 1943, observing teachers, giving demonstration lessons, and discussing school organization.³⁷ Subsequently, the Commission hired Arthur Anstey, the retired principal of the Provincial Normal School at Vancouver, as Educational Director. He visited the schools twice a year reporting on physical facilities, giving demonstration lessons, discussing problems with teachers, and administering standardized tests used to assist in grading the children. Hyodo and her principals reported regularly to Mrs. Cleo V. Booth of the Commission's Vancouver Office. Booth offered advice but admitted she had no educational background; before the war she was a stenographer in the Japanese consulate in Vancouver.

Although the records of the B.C. Security Commission are rich in many details, they are disappointingly thin on the actual process by which teachers were selected and on personnel details. Loyalty to Canada, however, was a factor. All were "thoroughly investigated" through RCMP records and a few who had received or sent "epistles considered as somewhat subversive" were reprimanded.³⁸ There is some evidence that the Commission occasionally requested the dismissal of certain teachers for reasons it could not reveal to Hyodo but normally she was responsible for dismissing or reassigning teachers whose classroom work, usually discipline, was unsatisfactory. On at least one occasion she dismissed a teacher whose teaching was satisfactory but whose personal conduct was not.³⁹

Because the relocation programme took priority over education⁴⁰ and its mistaken claim that there were plentiful opportunities for good jobs for young men in eastern Canada, the Commission was reluctant to authorize the use of male teachers except where they were required as physical-training instructors or to maintain discipline in the higher grades. Thus most teachers were female. Few had more than high school graduation; some had less. Most were in their late teens; one Grade 2 teacher was only 15. None had any experience as a

classroom teacher. As David Suzuki recalled, "Our teachers were girls barely out of high school, ill-prepared to handle the job."⁴¹

Class sizes varied from about 15 in the primary grades to an average of 25 in the other grades. Two children shared a set of texts in Grades 1 and 2. Due to what Booth described as "the natural docility of the Japanese children, and the encouraging attitude of parents towards Education," the system worked well in the lower grades. In the higher grades, at least at the beginning, it was another matter. The initial plan was to supply one set of correspondence lessons for every four students and to have the children study directly from them with the assistance of the teachers. While the Commission believed that "children who study from correspondence courses have a much better grounding in the fundamentals of education than the average school student," teachers soon discovered the lessons were "rather inadequate when applied to group instruction."⁴²

The papers were boring. Shizuye Takashima in her autobiography, *A Child in Prison Camp*, recalled "those stupid correspondence courses. We have to answer hundreds of questions...I don't understand any of them."⁴³ Only a set of the Grade 6 papers has survived but a perusal of them confirms Takashima's assessment. In Social Studies, for example, each correspondence lesson generally included a practice exercise of about 15 questions requiring a response of "True" or "False," one word, or possibly one sentence. The Mastery Work consisted of five to ten questions requiring about a sentence to answer.⁴⁴ Similarly, the literature lessons directed students to specific pages in the *Highroads to Reading*. Occasionally, the lesson explained some term or phrase in a poem or story. It always included questions such as "Name three things the author of 'Hymn for Canada' hoped God will make possible in Canada" or asked students to answer questions following the selections in the text.⁴⁵

A more practical problem was that the lessons were not easily shared; in subjects such as arithmetic and language, students required the simultaneous use of the teaching and practice booklets and the textbook. In addition, the health, nature, and geography lessons were often incomplete and, in the early stages at least, there were many production errors in which pages or lessons were missing and others were duplicated. Some teachers decided it was "more convenient to do most of the teaching" themselves and use the correspondence courses only as guides to be supplemented by reference books. Despite burning midnight oil, teachers were often "very little ahead of the pupils."⁴⁶

Most teachers recognized their serious responsibilities. As Takashi Tsuji, an ordained Buddhist priest⁴⁷ and president of the student council at the first summer school for teachers, admonished his classmates:

We, who were store clerks, stenographers, domestics and high school students made up our minds to become teachers and to participate in the important programme...must fully realize, that although the system itself may be temporary, whatever mental and spiritual wealth we give to the children to-day, will bear upon them a life-long influence....[T]each-

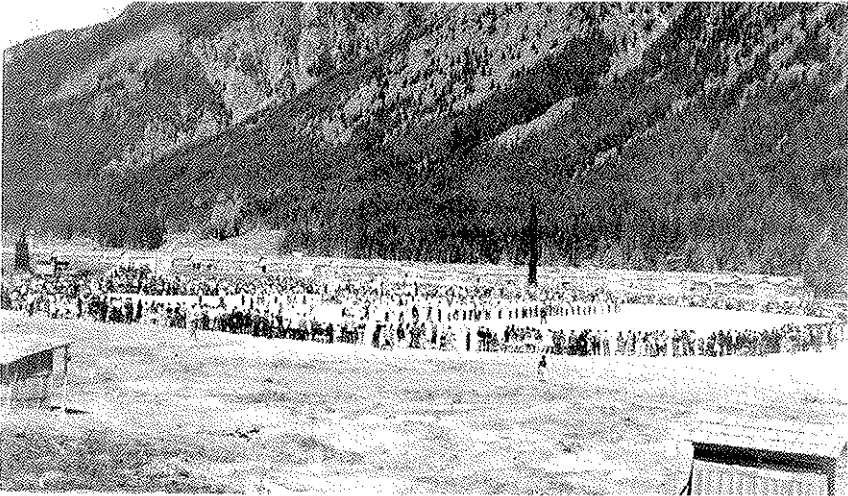
ing...is a sacred work—work we must undertake with our hearts and souls.⁴⁸

Even before all the schools opened, BCSC officials recognized the need for teacher training. Thus they gladly accepted the offer of Principal A.R. Lord of the Vancouver Normal School and some of his staff to operate a summer school. F.C. Boyes, the Social Studies Instructor at the Normal School, acted as Principal of the New Denver Summer School. His assistants came from the Normal School, the Model School, and a Vancouver school.

After teaching at the month-long summer school, Boyes reported that “no student body ever worked harder.” The principals attended daily meetings with Lord or Boyes to discuss administration, curriculum, testing, and discipline. The classroom teachers had a full schedule including a daily one-hour Physical Education class because many “were inclined to be too serious and unable to relax.” They also spent three hours on “Methods” courses related to the grades they were teaching. The afternoons were spent on study and extra-curricular activities including arts, crafts, music, and dancing. Although an old-time resident of New Denver described them as “a very lighthearted merry crowd,”⁴⁹ their seriousness was evident in the failure of purely recreational activities such as baseball and tennis. The students also requested “extra work in English.” Groups were organized to practise Oral and Written English through such activities as public speaking, a school paper, and a drama club which publicly performed a play written about the local area by the History group. A student council provided experience in organizing meetings and activities including concerts and a dance.⁵⁰

Summer school training combined with the teachers' increasing experience benefited their students. By the fall of 1943, many teachers abandoned the correspondence lessons and taught directly from the provincial Programme of Studies⁵¹ and organized more extra-curricular activities. All centres held Christmas concerts complete with the usual fare of songs, dances, and playlets. Some schools also produced newspapers, held assemblies and seasonal concerts, and developed school songs,⁵² and, at Lemon Creek, teachers sought to “create better understanding between their students and their Canadian friends out in the East,” by initiating a pen-pal programme with students in Ingersoll, Ontario.⁵³ Such activities provided enjoyable practice in English expression and relieved some of the isolation of the interior housing settlements.

Isolation was a fact of life. At the first summer school Boyes had noted that his students lacked the broad background necessary “to teach Social Studies in an interesting manner.” He blamed the ban on radio receivers and the meagre supply of reference material.⁵⁴ Similarly, early in 1945 the principal of Bay Farm School was shocked when a questionnaire given to children in Grade 5 and up revealed that 74 of the 228 students did not know the name of the prime minister. He concluded that his students were “shut inside a huge stone wall, utterly oblivious of the gigantic change outside.” Indeed, some teachers arranged ball



May Day celebrations, brought to B.C. by English settlers, also appealed to Japanese-Canadians. Community celebrations, such as this Maypole dance in Tashme, were held in several interior housing settlements.

UBC Special Collections, Japanese-Canadian Collection

games with nearby Commission schools so children would at least gain a little knowledge of neighbouring communities. In several schools National Film Board films offered a view of the outside world.⁵⁵

The success of the first summer school led to the holding of a second in the summer of 1944 under the direction of Lord and many members of the original staff. Of the students, 101 were returnees, 25 had little or no teaching experience, and 11 were principals or supervisors. The returnees were placed in advanced classes; a preliminary class was held for the beginners; and a special programme in administration was devised for the principals. Because of demonstrated problems with the children's use of English, the school gave special attention to English usage including the writing and production of a four-act play on the history of the Japanese in Canada and special courses in public speaking, drama, and vocal music. The results of the intensive English programme were striking. The median score in the Dominion Language Test had been 79.5 at the beginning of the session; it was 92 at the end.⁵⁶

Weakness in English was not a new problem; the Japanese themselves were well aware of it.⁵⁷ The Commission also recognized that "the children as a whole are far below average in the subjects belonging to the language group." In largely Japanese communities, language skills could deteriorate further. This was particularly true at Tashme, an all-Japanese community, where pre-school children spoke Japanese almost exclusively, but it was also noticeable at Kaslo where, despite considerable integration of the Japanese and Caucasian communities outside the elementary schools, Japanese children chattered in the streets in "a foreign and enemy tongue." Teachers realized the academic implications, name-

ly the poor results in the Stanford tests administered in June 1944 and reports from the high school about poor English hindering students academically and socially, but had limited success in checking the use of Japanese and encouraging the use of English.⁵⁸

Despite the stereotype of the docile Japanese child, maintaining discipline was a problem for inexperienced teachers, especially in Grades 5 and 6. When they started, their only guides were their own common sense and a six-page mimeographed essay on the subject that Dr. Norman F. Black, an experienced teacher,⁵⁹ had prepared, possibly for use at Hastings Park. The beginning teachers attended daily staff meetings to discuss "the socialized studies in all grades," (apparently a euphemism for discipline). As they became more experienced, meetings became less frequent.⁶⁰

In the case of classroom problems, the principals admitted that sometimes teachers were to blame. This was certainly true at Tashme which had more than its share of young teachers and turnover of principals. The woman who served as principal from late 1943 until December 1944 attributed discipline problems in certain classes to teachers who were "too friendly with their pupils, and are always fooling with them." At another school where the Grade 5 and 6 classes were unruly, the principal held staff meetings where other teachers advised their colleagues not to "let the children get away with anything like that." That principal took both classes for an hour a day to give the regular teachers time to do supplementary work in their reference books in order to "keep the class busier in the periods they take." Another principal admitted she "almost strapped everyone of the kids" in a Grade 5 class. A new teacher could not handle a group of "well-mannered decent kids with just an overabundance of energy." "We tried everything" with these boys, the principal explained, "even to making them sit with the girls." Finally, the principal "split up the gang into the three grade V classes." At another school, a new principal discovered that "discipline, courtesy and school spirit was definitely lacking in all grades"; she let it be known that "all teachers are responsible for all the students so that a child does not think about his conduct when only certain teachers are around." That policy, the creation of a student council, and the cultivation of PTA support resulted in "a marked change for the better" in "the atmosphere in the school."⁶¹

Nevertheless, there were always a few mischief-makers, inevitably male and chiefly in Grades 5 and 6. Solutions varied. A child who broke a window with a snowball was sent to apologize to the superintendent of the settlement; boys who misbehaved at a concert were reprimanded and one who refused to apologize was effectively required to withdraw from school; ill-mannered students were instructed in manners; a boy who swore at a primary teacher was strapped but apparently learned his lesson; when swearing became a general problem at one school, students were fined one cent; a smoking problem was dealt with by the PTA which asked parents and stores to co-operate in stopping it; and "a sudden epidemic of slingshots" was resolved when the student council decided that after one general warning, it would confiscate slingshots. At Riverview School, the

fine for eating in school was twenty-five cents. Since children had little pocket money, they had to ask their parents for it. This request required an explanation and usually resulted in a parental lecture. The school secretly returned the fine money to the parents.⁶²

Gradually, many schools acquired student councils and systems of prefects who made and enforced school rules. At New Denver, where the students asked for a prefect system, the prefects saw "that students line up, obey school rules set by the council and staff, [and maintain] order on the school grounds." To punish offenders, the student council set up a detention room. The council, which selected the prefects, considered its choices carefully and sometimes appointed "problem boys who might benefit by being given the honour, and couple them with dependable boys." Bay Farm School eliminated discipline problems with a House System and Monitor's Court based on a programme devised at Vancouver's Templeton Junior High School. The student council imposed such punishments as washing windows, scrubbing desks, and snow clearing. At Lemon Creek, after the principal discovered some children taking advantage of the absence of teachers at lunch time, the student council decided that "no matter how cold the weather," the children could not re-enter the building until 12:40 p.m. when the prefects would be on duty. At Popoff, however, the prefect and Students Court system did not work initially because "the pupils were too loyal to each other, and would not sentence their friends."⁶³

Principals recognized the need to provide children with extra activities since few constructive diversions were available. The establishment of Boy Scout and Girl Guide troops was encouraged to teach "fair play, courtesy, obedience [and] responsibility." In some cases, Scouts provided physical education for older boys.⁶⁴ Guiding and Scouts were also expected to help promote a Canadian identity.

Because the Commission hoped to relocate all Japanese east of the Rockies, it was anxious to ensure that its students could transfer easily to regular public schools when they left British Columbia. This meant that pupils had to be properly graded. Beginning in the fall of 1943 the Commission administered Stanford Achievement Tests in all schools before regrading and promoting a large number of children.⁶⁵ Overall, these tests revealed the students had "remarkably high" marks in drill subjects such as arithmetic and spelling and were "far above the accepted standard" of American schools in all subjects except paragraph interpretation and word meaning.⁶⁶

The Commission always expected most Japanese would remain in Canada. In practical terms this was reflected in its educational policies. Although it considered offering manual training and home economics to Grade 8 graduates in order to provide them with marketable skills in eastern Canada, it ultimately confined these subjects to Grades 7 and 8 where they were part of the provincial course of studies. In some cases the course was adapted to prepare students "to take up remunerative work at the end of their elementary school education." At Tashme, for example, laundry work and bed-making were added to the home

economics curriculum "so that a graduate of these classes will be fully trained in domestic work." Similarly, the Commission encouraged boys to attend cooking classes as a Club activity since cooking was "well suited to the Canadian Japanese from an employment angle." The Commission also refused to "freeze" teachers in their employment since "the satisfactory relocation of persons outside the centres is of more importance than a slight loss which the Education Department may suffer by the departure of a few teachers." By early 1944 some teachers were leaving because of marriage or because they had accepted the Commission's advice to move east. When parents expressed concern about the loss of experienced teachers, *The New Canadian*, the *Nisei* newspaper, suggested that for the well-being of their children, parents should also consider relocation.⁶⁷

The Commission had recognized that "the fundamental error in the present system is the lack of association of these Japanese-Canadian children with Canadian children of British and other racial origins. The Japanese home influence becomes increasingly strong without the counteracting influence of purely Canadian teachers and associates." At the first summer school, Howard Pammett advised that children should be encouraged to use English since "children who talk Japanese among themselves also think in Japanese and therefore cannot get the most out of a Canadian education given to them in English. That defect will handicap their lives wherever they live in Canada."⁶⁸

The teachers followed instructions to discourage the use of Japanese. By the summer of 1944, the BCSC reported that none of its officials had ever heard a word of Japanese in the schools. One principal, who found some children persistently using Japanese, organized a house system and issued demerits for any child using Japanese. Thus, in the winter of 1945, the Commission was surprised by an unsubstantiated report that possibly half its teachers were "nationalistic." The Commission could do little except "keep them under constant check and warn them not to deviate from the regular teaching curriculum." The cause, Pammett speculated, was that family influences were stronger than the Canadianizing influences of the summer schools. The Commission also believed that clandestine Japanese-language schools were operating at Tashme and at Lemon Creek. But apart from reminding parents that the use of Japanese at home and play would handicap their children in school and in "every phase of Canadian life when they grow up" and antagonize other Canadians, it did nothing.⁶⁹

In August 1944, Prime Minister King announced that residents of the settlements must choose between relocating east of the Rockies or going to Japan. Children were well disposed to relocation but parents waited for "definite action" by the government.⁷⁰ By the end of 1944, the school population had dropped to only 2,209 from its October 1943 peak of 2,449. Finally, in March 1945 the government announced definite action; residents of the interior housing settlements must move east of the Rockies or sign for "repatriation to Japan." Although some children seemed upset by the move, others appeared unaffected. Their teachers, however, experienced uncertainty. A few teachers moved east

on their own and the number of teachers declined to 104 by December 1944. Since most teachers now had some experience, it was possible to increase class sizes. Teachers then heard conflicting rumours that they would be cut off the payroll as soon as they said they intended to go east; others claimed teachers could not leave until they found substitutes. In fact, some teachers who announced they were going east received notices quickly; some who had not stated their intentions also received notices; others were left in place. From the point of view of school administrators, the movement was confusing; some teachers left sooner than expected and finding replacements was not always easy. Indeed, as the 1944-45 school year ended, some schools had few teachers but enrolment had only declined to 2,115.⁷¹

Among those who were departing was Miss Hyodo. To assist her successor, Miss Hidaka, and to act as principal at Tashme, the Commission appointed Kayou Ochiai who had had three years of Normal School Training in Japan, attended all three summer schools at New Denver, and served as principal at Rosebery for two years. The Commission expected about half of the staff for the 1945-46 school year would be beginners so it held another summer school. Although three-quarters of the students had signed for repatriation, they were co-operative and interested.⁷²

Because many young adults signed for repatriation, there were few problems in staffing the schools at Tashme and in the Slocan where the repatriates were concentrated.⁷³ If the surviving records are indicative, the Commission had little interest in these schools and even agreed to permit Japanese-language teaching during the last hour of the school day if parents so requested. The atmosphere in these schools reflected the widespread uncertainty particularly among those who now realized that the Canadian government really meant it when it had offered them the opportunity to go to Japan.⁷⁴ By the fall of 1945, senior students at Bay Farm in Slocan were restless, they understood their life was temporary, they adopted a "what's the use attitude" and lost their incentives. "'Temporary' and 'uncertainty' has been so implanted in their minds," their principal explained, "that they cannot concentrate on such tedious work as studying." Moreover, the thought of having to go to Japan weighed heavily on them.⁷⁵ In the end, not all had to go to Japan, a land most of them had never seen.

In the relocation settlements, the Commission expected it would need only about 33 teachers for the 1945-46 school year. While it was anxious to promote relocation as quickly as possible, it decided not to press any teachers to move during the year as long as their services were required and there were no substitutes. By the spring of 1946 as the movement to the east got underway on a large scale, school populations fell. In some cases, the Commission transferred students to local boards and paid tuition fees on their behalf. In New Denver, where families who wished to remain in Canada but could not be easily relocated had been assembled, the Commission operated a small school until the end of the 1946-47 school year when the remaining students and two teachers transferred to the local public school.⁷⁶ Indeed, for some teachers, their experience opened

new careers. Between 1945 and 1948 nine different Japanese names appeared on the payrolls of British Columbia's public schools. Others found teaching positions in Ontario.⁷⁷

After visiting the schools in the fall of 1943, Anstey emphasized the "great credit" due to those who initiated the venture, to the supervisors, to the teachers and "to the patient group of some 2,500 *children* who (with the backing of the home) are doing their best to benefit from the opportunity that is being offered them."⁷⁸ The ideal test of whether or not they "got the utmost" out of the "opportunity" would be a detailed analysis of the subsequent careers of students and teachers. Such an examination is theoretically possible but the problem of tracing and questioning approximately 2,500 individuals who were subsequently scattered across Canada or "repatriated" to Japan would be exceedingly difficult. Thus, we must rely on very limited, mixed, and mainly anecdotal evidence. David Suzuki, the geneticist, has remarked, "Somehow, those years at Bay Farm School didn't turn me off," but he attributes his interest in study to his father's great interest in learning. One student of Tashme High School recalled how her little brother who did Grades 3 through 5 there had no problems in Grade 6 when the family moved to Alberta. Yet at Tashme a United Church high school teacher reported that "each year the class of pupils entering grade 9 showed a poorer grounding in basic subjects such as English and Mathematics than the previous class, showing the effect of partially trained teachers and of the gradual increase in the use of the Japanese language in the community." Joy Kogawa's semi-fictional heroine, Naomi Nakane, who attended school at Slocan, found in Alberta that "arithmetic is easier and spelling is harder."⁷⁹ This suggests she was reasonably well taught but it contradicts some of the only "scientific" evidence, the Stanford tests.

In June 1945, 74% of the 61 classes in Grades 4 through 8 tested, reached or exceeded the American norm for their grade as compared to 54% in 1944 and only 31% in December 1943. The students continued to be strong in arithmetic and spelling but weak in English language. Indeed, on the basis of American norms, only 66% of the children qualified for promotion though that was a dramatic increase from 50% a year earlier. However, some students were promoted because they were over-age or their term work justified it and the pass rate was 75-80%. What struck Anstey was that few Grade 4 classes reached American standards. He did not know whether that was the result of poor teaching, the relative lack of previous exposure to an English-speaking environment, or the unreliability of such tests for younger children. Nevertheless, Anstey concluded, "it is a pleasure, perhaps somewhat of a surprise, to testify to the genuine quality of the work that is being done, to the unstinting efforts of principals and class teachers, to the hearty co-operation of student-councils and senior pupils, and to the help given by the two supervisors and—in most

localities—by the parents. Without this desirable spirit of 'working together' results would have been meagre indeed."⁸⁰

Perhaps the last word should be left to the valedictory of the principal of Bay Farm School in June 1945:

We, who have chosen to leave the staff in order to start life anew in other parts of Canada cannot help but look back upon our three years with the children and know that we will certainly miss them. They might have been discouraging at times, and we might have had spells of disappointment but at this time of leaving, we know that we did try to do our very best for the young pupils, and they in turn tried so hard to please. It has been a time well spent and we shall all leave with a satisfied and happy feeling.⁸¹

"We did try to do our very best" was the theme of most teachers. "Due to their keenness regarding education," they, and their students, got "the utmost out of the whole plan."

NOTES

- * I wish to thank Michiko Midge Ayukawa, Jean Barman, and Dan Hawthorne for their helpful comments on the manuscript.
1. J.A. Tyrwhitt to F.B. Pearce, 24 Sept. 1942, National Archives of Canada (hereafter NAC), British Columbia Security Commission (hereafter BCSC) Records, vol. 12/500.
 2. Vancouver *Sun*, 24 July 1925.
 3. Rigenda Sumida, "The Japanese in British Columbia" (M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1935), 521ff.
 4. Arthur Laing to G.M. Weir, 20 Aug. 1940, British Columbia Archives and Records Service (hereafter BCARS), Premiers' Papers, GR1222, vol. 27/1.
 5. British Columbia Public Schools, *Annual Report, 1926-27* (Victoria: King's Printer, 1927), M57.
 6. The anonymous interviewee in Barry Broadfoot, *Years of Sorrow, Years of Shame* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1977), 241 is clearly Miss Hyodo.
 7. The British Columbia Security Commission was formed in March 1942 and officially dissolved in February 1943 when its duties were transferred directly to the Department of Labour. However, the name continued in popular use and in this context is used in this paper.
 8. W.S. McRae, Report on Educational Services for Children of Japanese Parents, cJuly 1942, BCSC, vol. 11/500.
 9. MacNamara to Minister of Labour, 9 Feb. 1943, NAC, Ian Mackenzie Papers, vol. 25; Pammett to MacNamara, 4 Feb. 1943, BCSC, vol. 13/503. The Commission advised supervisors of the settlements that until it set up schools, the evacuees would have to organize their own classes. Some tried to do this but their resources were limited. In Slokan, Albert Takimoto, who had been a supervisor at Hastings Park,

- asked the provincial Director of Elementary Correspondence Instruction for assistance. Provincial government policy meant she could not co-operate.
10. Report of BCSC Welfare Committee, 28 Oct. 1942, and Minutes, Maintenance Advisory Committee, 24 Nov. 1942, BCSC, vol. 7/163.
 11. The Swiss, who also acted for Japan, also inquired about educational opportunities for evacuee children. A. Rive to High Commissioner, London, 3 Dec. 1943, NAC, Department of External Affairs Records, vol. 3005, file 3464-M-40. Representatives of the International Red Cross visited the settlements from time to time. They mentioned education but made no particular comments.
 12. By Oct. 1942, 2,423 students resided in the interior settlements and 571 in the self-supporting groups. The difference between the initial estimate and the actual number is partly explained by the departure of some families to Alberta and Manitoba and by the movement of some on their own to scattered points in the interior of British Columbia, notably the Okanagan Valley.
 13. W.A. Eastwood to MacNamara, 8 Aug. 1942, BCSC, vol. 13/503.
 14. J.S. Willis to Tyrwhitt, 6 Oct. 1942, BCARS, British Columbia High School Correspondence Branch Records, vol. 1/1; Mitchell to John Hart, 12 Apr. 1943, Premiers' Papers, vol. 163/4; Anna B. Miller to Tyrwhitt, 19 Oct. 1942, BCSC, vol. 12/500; J.E. Read to King, 10 Feb. 1943, NAC, W.L.M. King Papers, #C249486-7; King to Hart, 12 Feb. 1943, Mackenzie Papers, vol. 25. Since only a few school boards admitted Japanese students, the Commission had to provide some supervision and limited financial assistance towards education in the self-supporting settlements in the Lillooet area where evacuees paid local property taxes to support the public schools but had to arrange private schooling for their own children. In a few cases, local school officials were co-operative. At Grand Forks, in return for tuition fees paid by the Commission and parents, the School Board accepted about forty Japanese children into the public school. In New Denver and Kaslo, teachers in the city schools invited the Japanese teachers to observe their classes, but in Slocan the hostility of the local principal prevented this.
 15. Tyrwhitt to MacNamara, 5 Oct. 1942, BCSC, vol. 12/503. Tyrwhitt to Eastwood, 8 Nov. 1942, BCSC, vol. 12/502.
 16. Booth to Eastwood, 17 Mar. 1943, BCSC, vol. 13/503; Booth to George Hoji, President, PTA, Bay Farm School, 11 Aug. 1943, BCSC, vol. 11/300. Because of Access to Information restrictions, not all the information about the Tashme case is available; Stephen A. Kamino to Booth, 13 Oct. 1943, BCSC, vol. 21/716.
 17. See Patricia Roy, "A Tale of Two Cities: The Reception of Japanese Evacuees in Kelowna and Kaslo, B.C.," *BC Studies* 87 (Autumn 1990): 23-47.
 18. It was housed in temporary quarters and had 9 teachers and 212 students in Grades 1 to 8. It used desks borrowed from the local school board. Later, a renovated hardware store accommodated all nine classes and had adequate partitions and lighting.
 19. Collins to MacNamara, 7 Sept. 1943, BCSC, vol. 13/503; C.G. McNeill, M.D., to T.C. Orford, 21 Oct. 1943, BCSC, vol. 21/716.
 20. E.L. Boulton to George Collins, 10 Aug. 1943, BCSC, vol. 1/20.
 21. Quoted in Thomas James, *Exile Within: The Schooling of Japanese Americans 1942-1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 39-40.
 22. *Summer School Echoes*, 3 Aug. 1943.
 23. "New Denver Summer School, 1944," BCSC, vol. 13/514.
 24. *Programme of Studies*, 283.

25. Arthur Anstey, "British Columbia," 63, bound with A.L. Burt, *The Romance of Canada* (Toronto: Gage, 1946). Although the copy examined carries a 1946 publication date, internal evidence suggests it is a reprint of an earlier version.
26. British Columbia, Department of Education, *Programme of Studies, Elementary, 1941* (Victoria: King's Printer, 1941), 6.
27. Burt, *Romance*, 256.
28. Perry to Tyrwhitt, 28 Aug. 1942, BCSC, vol. 13/503.
29. James, *Exile Within*, 43.
30. Tyrwhitt to all Supervisors in Interior Housing Settlements, 6 Oct. 1942, BCSC, vol. 12/500.
31. Taylor to MacNamara, 27 Oct. 1942, BCSC, vol. 13/503. The Commission proposed to pay Miss Hyodo \$65 per month; her assistant, Miss Teruko Hidaka, \$50; \$40-\$45 per month to senior tutors who had some teacher training or university experience; and \$30 to junior tutors. The BCSC paid \$25 per capita to Manitoba for Japanese students and \$65 to Alberta. Had Caucasian teachers been available, the BCSC would have had to pay them about \$1,300 per year.
32. Miss Hidaka had graduated from Maple Ridge High School and the Provincial Normal School. The Maple Ridge School Board hired her as a substitute teacher but after some parents withdrew their children from her class, the school board decided not to hire any teacher who was ineligible to vote. Since Japanese could not vote in British Columbia that ended Miss Hidaka's career as a public school teacher. (Sumida, "The Japanese," 579ff.) She later taught in one of the kindergartens operated by the United Church.
33. Booth to Eastwood, 17 Mar. 1943, BCSC, vol. 13/503.
34. Booth, "Education, British Columbia, January to June 1945," BCSC, vol. 13/514.
35. Pammatt to MacNamara, 4 Feb. 1943, BCSC, vol. 13/503. At first, the Commission had proposed that a white supervisor and ten white principals would supervise the work of about 135 Japanese teachers or "coaches." Tyrwhitt to Perry, 29 July 1942, BCSC, vol. 13/500.
36. MacNamara to Collins, 27 July 1943, BCSC, vol. 13/503.
37. Booth, "Education in British Columbia," 15 Apr. 1943, BCSC, vol. 13/513.
38. Booth, "Education in British Columbia," 15 Apr. 1943. The mail to and from the housing centres was censored.
39. Booth to Hyodo, 5 and 19 Feb. 1943; Hyodo to Booth, 17 Mar. 1943; Hyodo to Booth, 5 June 1943; Booth to Hyodo, 28 June 1943, BCSC, vol. 12/501.
40. Booth to Hyodo, 16 Nov. 1943, BCSC, vol. 12/501.
41. Tyrwhitt to Hyodo, 22 Dec. 1942, BCSC, vol. 12/500; Booth to Okuda, 17 Feb. 1943; and Lists of Applicants and Teachers Appointed, Tashme, c. early 1943, BCSC, vol. 21/716; Booth to MacNamara, 3 Feb. 1943, BCSC, vol. 13/503; David Suzuki, *Metamorphosis: Stages in a Life* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1987), 67.
42. Booth to Eastwood, 17 Mar. 1943, BCSC, vol. 13/503; Booth to H. Okuda, 27 Jan. 1943; BCSC and Hidaka to Booth, 23 Feb. 1943, BCSC, vol. 21/716.
43. Shizuye Takashima, *A Child in Prison Camp* (Montreal, 1971), n.p.
44. An opportunity did exist for "Honor Work" in which students might prepare booklets including relevant pictures or stories and drawings of their own creation.
45. There were a number of possible answers including freedom from oppression, justice, and courage. Copies of the lessons may be found in BCARS, Department of Education, Elementary Correspondence Branch, vol. 7.

46. Hidaka to Booth, 23 Feb. 1943, BCSC, vol. 21/716; Booth to Miller, 18 Jan. 1942, BCARS, Elementary Correspondence Branch, vol. 14.
47. I am indebted to Michiko Midge Ayukawa for this information.
48. *Summer School Echoes*, 4 Aug. 1943.
49. J.C. Harris, "Our New Canadian's Problems," c.Sept. 1944, BCARS, J.C. Harris Papers, vol. 3/12.
50. F.C. Boyes, "British Columbia Security Commission, New Denver Summer School, July-August 1943," BCSC, vol. 13/513.
51. Booth to Miller, 14 Oct. 1943, Department of Education, Elementary Correspondence Branch, vol. 14.
52. In her partly autobiographical novel, *Obasan*, Joy Kogawa records some words of her school song: "Slocan get on your toes/We are as everyone knows/The school with spirit high!/We all do our best/And never never will rest/Till we with triumph cry..." (Toronto: Lester, Orpen & Dennys, 1981), 157.
53. Lemon Creek School Report, Jan. 1945, BCSC, vol. 13/513.
54. "New Denver Summer School, 1944," BCSC, vol. 13/514.
55. Takashi Tsuji, Bay Farm School Report, 2 Feb. and 1 Mar. 1945.
56. "New Denver Summer School, 1944," BCSC, vol. 13/514. The median score in the Dominion Language Tests for students entering the Vancouver Normal School was 82.
57. Sumida, "The Japanese in B.C.," 513.
58. Booth, "Monthly Educational Report, April 1943"; Booth to MacNamara, 3 Feb. 1943, BCS, vol. 13/503; *Kootenaiian*, 10 Feb. 1944; *The New Canadian*, 19 Feb. 1944; *The New Canadian*, 4 Mar. 1944; Kaslo School Reports, 2 May, 30 Sept. and Oct. 1944, BCSC, vol. 13/513.
59. Some years earlier, Black had edited the report of a British Columbia Committee on School Administration set up by the High School Teachers' Association of the Lower Mainland. Norman F. Black, ed., *Peace & Efficiency in School Administration* (Toronto: J.M. Dent, 1926).
60. Collins to MacNamara, 2 Mar. 1943, and Booth to Eastwood, 17 Mar. 1943, BCSC, vol. 13/503; Booth, "Education," 15 Apr. 1943.
61. Tashme, Reports, Mar. and Apr. 1944; Riverview School Report, Feb. 1944; Lemon Creek School Report, Feb. 1944; Popoff School Reports, Sept. 1944 and Feb. 1945; Hyodo to Booth, 6 Feb. 1945, BCSC, vol. 13/513.
62. Lemon Creek School Report, Feb., Mar., and Apr. 1944; Sandon School Report, Mar. 1944; Riverview School Report, Mar. 1944 and Nov. 1945; New Denver Orchard School Report, Oct. 1944, vol. 13/513.
63. New Denver Orchard School Report, Feb. and Oct. 1944; Bay Farm School Report, Dec. 1945; Lemon Creek School Report, Feb. 1944; Popoff School Report, Nov. 1945, all in BCSC, vol. 13/513.
64. Popoff School Report, Nov. 1944 and Booth, "September-December 1944," BCSC, vol. 13/514.
65. Anstey defended these tests as measurements of achievement, intelligence, and "the ability to use facts, to relate them one to another, and to draw conclusions" rather than merely the ability to recall facts. "Report on the B.C.S.C. Schools of the Interior," July 1945.
66. Booth, "Education, British Columbia, November-December 1943." British Columbia students as a whole traditionally scored well on such American tests. George S.

- Tomkins, *A Common Countenance: Stability and Change in the Canadian Curriculum* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1986), 242.
67. MacNamara to Collins, 31 Aug. 1943 and Anstey to Collins, 29 Oct. 1943, BCSC, vol. 13/503; Booth, "Education: British Columbia," July 1944 and "September-December 1944," BCSC, vol. 13/514; Booth to Hyodo, 9 Nov. 1943, BCSC, vol. 12/501; *The New Canadian*, 22 Jan. and 29 Apr. 1944.
 68. Booth, "Education," 15 Apr. 1943; *Summer School Echoes*, 4 Aug. 1943, copy in BCSC, vol. 28/1316.
 69. Annual Report, 1943-44, copy in BCSC, vol. 13/514; Rosebery, Principal's Report, Jan. and Feb. 1945, BCSC, vol. 13/513; Pammett to Booth, 6 Feb. 1945, NAC, Department of Labour Records, vol. 657; MacNamara to Collins, 8 Nov. and 13 Dec. 1943, BCSC, vol. 13/503.
 70. Booth, "September-December 1944", BCSC, vol. 13/514.
 71. Popoff School Report, Mar. 1945; Sugiura to Booth, 2 May 1945, BCSC, vol. 13/513; Booth, "September-December 1944," and "Jan. to June, 1945," BCSC, vol. 13/514; Yoshiko Tanabe to Booth, 2 May 1945 and M. Uyeda to Booth, 3 May 1945, BCSC, vol. 13/513; H.T. Pammett, "Report on Inspection Trip to Vancouver and through Japanese Projects—June 15-30, 1945," BCSC, vol. 17/630.
 72. T.B. Pickersgill to MacNamara, 17 Sept. 1945, BCSC, vol. 13/514.
 73. Pammett, "Report on Inspection Trip," BCSC, vol. 17/630.
 74. MacNamara to T.B. Pickersgill, 18 Aug. 1945, BCSC, vol. 14/514.
 75. This complex matter is discussed in greater detail in Patricia E. Roy et al., *Mutual Hostages: Canadians and Japanese during the Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), chap. 6. Sugiura to Booth, 2 Oct. 1945, and Report, Nov. 1945, BCSC, vol. 13/513.
 76. Pammett, "Report on Inspection Trip," BCSC, vol. 17/630; MacNamara to Pickersgill, 8 June 1946 and Booth to Pammett, 19 Feb. 1947, BCSC, vol. 12/500.
 77. Booth to Pammett, 19 Feb. 1947, BCSC, vol. 12/500; Public Schools, *Annual Reports*, 1945-48, passim.
 78. Anstey to Booth, 29 Oct. 1943, BCSC, vol. 13/513.
 79. Suzuki, *Metamorphosis*, 68; Broadfoot, *Years of Sorrow*, 252-53; W. McBride, "Tashme," BCARS, Mrs. J.W. Awmack Collection; Kogawa, *Obasan*, 157.
 80. Arthur Anstey, "Report on B.C.S.C. Schools of the Interior," July 1945, BCSC, vol. 13/514.
 81. Bay Farm School Report, 16 June 1945, BCSC, vol. 13/513.