

Treatment of Japanese Canadians

We have just looked at women in Canada during the war and taken a quick look at how the war impacted the rest of the nation who did not go off to fight. But there is one group of Canadians who experienced severe discrimination during the war, simply because of their race and the colour of their skin.

Japanese Canadians, both citizens and those who were living here legally, faced immense discrimination and hardship during the war. They were punished for simply being Japanese at a time when there were fears of Japanese attacks on Canada. When Japan attacked _____ in 1941, the act that brought the United States into the war, there was intense pressure on the Canadian government to do something about the _____ Japanese Canadians who were living in British Columbia. Some feared that these people – including the children – were Japanese spies living in Canada and were sending _____ information back to the Japanese military, who would then launch an attack on Canada. Over _____ of the Japanese Canadians who lived in British Columbia were born here in Canada and had very little, if any, ties back to Japan. Most _____. Simply because they lived on the coast, they were viewed as a security threat. The success that many had as businessmen and fishermen also led some Canadians to suspect these people.

Added to these fears at home was the success of the Japanese military overseas. Victories in the _____, including the capture of _____ and _____ Canadian troops, convinced many Canadians that it was only a matter of time before Japan would attack the West Coast. This fear emerged despite the _____ report that stated that there was no reason to expect any sort of threat from Japanese Canadians.

After Pearl Harbor, however, the government began to act. The Canadian government seized all Japanese Canadian _____, and by _____ began to round up all Canadians of Japanese descent. This was all done legally through the _____.

In times of national emergency, such as war, democratic governments often take away some of their citizens' rights in order to protect the well-being of the entire Democracy. The War Measures Act allowed the government to do certain things _____ from the elected representatives in Parliament. In trying to win the _____, the government did the following:

- moved workers to _____ such as munitions production;
- _____ products such as gasoline;
- conducted searches of _____ without a _____;

- _____;
- _____ news and information; and
- _____.

For example, in 1942, the federal government seized one third of the reserve land that belonged to the Kettle and Stony Point Band along Lake Huron. The land was used as a military training facility and was never returned to the owners. The War Measures Act allowed the government to do almost anything it wanted to people, all in the name of national security.



Using this act, the government began an _____ of Japanese Canadians in _____. Internment, in this instance, was taking all of the Japanese Canadian families, removing them from their homes, taking all of their property, and relocating them to detention camps in the interior of British Columbia.

The Canadian government decided to forcibly remove _____ Japanese Canadians living along the coastline of _____ and other parts of Canada, and to place them in detention camps or internment camps in the interior of the province.

No Japanese Canadian was ever charged with any act of sabotage or disloyalty to Canada. Prime Minister King even stated that “No person of Japanese race born in Canada has been charged with any _____ or disloyalty during the years of war.”

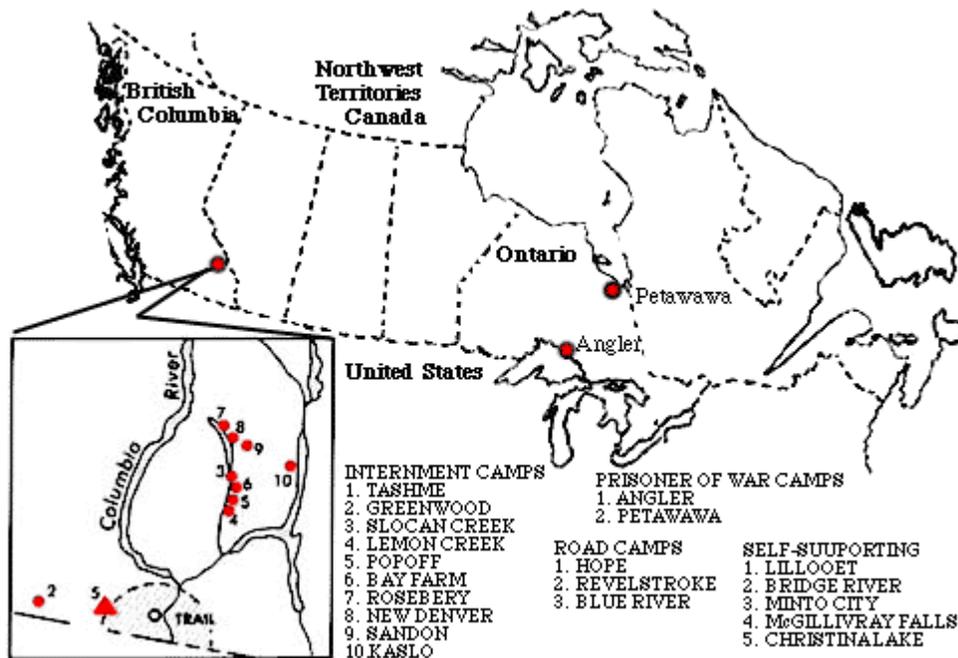
Some families were sent to farms in _____ and Manitoba for the remainder of the war.

They had no rights and could not legally refuse to obey. Men, women, and children were _____ and _____, and given an _____.

They were required to carry their identification cards with them at all times. Going to the camps, there were only allowed to take one suitcase – all of their other belongings were auctioned off to pay for the costs of their internment. The Japanese Canadians lost everything.



Their dignity as people was also threatened. While in the camps, they lived in uninsulated tar shacks with _____. Men between _____ were often separated from their families to work on farms or repair roads. Anyone who dared to resist the government was sent to a concentration camp in _____, Ontario, where they were forced to wear uniforms with a _____ on their clothing.





Although King admitted that no Japanese Canadians had been charged with sabotage, they were forced to choose between _____ back to Japan to relocation east of the Rocky Mountains. Most chose to move east, many settling in the Prairies, Ontario, and Quebec. Even so, in _____, the government tried to deport about _____ Japanese Canadians; the plan was abandoned when Canadians

from all parts of Canada launched a massive public protest.

German and Italian immigrants in Canada also came under attack during World War II but not to the same extent as the Japanese Canadians. _____ of German Canadians were _____ because they were considered threats to national security. Thousands of Italian Canadians were photographed and fingerprinted and some _____ were arrested under the _____. People were also fired from their jobs because of their ethnic backgrounds.

The Japanese Canadians spent the rest of the war in these camps, their citizenship and rights completely stripped away. In _____, however, Parliament acknowledged that the treatment of the Japanese Canadians was “_____” and gave the survivors money to help compensate them for their losses. Family members were given \$_____ each. That same year, the federal government announced that \$_____ would be paid to each of the Hong Kong veterans or their widows.

Questions

- 1) Why were Japanese Canadians considered a threat in 1941? Do you agree with this notion?
- 2) What actions did the government take under the authority of the War Measures Act? Did anything the government do go beyond what they were allowed to do?
- 3) Do you think that the compensation given to Japanese Canadians was enough? If you feel that they should have been given more, what should they have been given?