

# **“McGill University’s Racial Exclusion of Japanese Canadians, 1943-1945”**

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## **Abstract**

In February 1942, the Canadian government exiled all Japanese Canadians from the Pacific coast, including 76 students attending the University of British Columbia. While other Canadian universities enrolled some Japanese Canadian students recommended by the British Columbia Security Commission, McGill University's Senate exceptionally banned all students "of Japanese racial origin" in October 1943. Using documents from McGill's archives, the Department of External Affairs, Japanese Canadian oral histories, and press coverage, this thesis outlines exclusionist Senate members' manipulation of rules of procedure to pass the policy, the resulting conflict at Senate, resistance from students and the public, threatened interference from the Board of Governors, and the policy's ultimate repeal in 1945. The expulsion of one student is contrasted with the continued presence of at least seven Japanese Canadian students on campus while the policy was in effect. Denial of educational opportunity is characterized as part of the broader dispossession enacted on Japanese Canadians in the 1940s.

## **Résumé**

En février 1942, le gouvernement du Canada a exilé tous les Canadiens d'origine japonaise de la côte pacifique, incluant 76 étudiants de l'Université de la Colombie-Britannique. Alors que d'autres universités canadiennes ont admis certains Canadiens d'origine japonaise, suite aux recommandations de la *British Columbia Securities Commission*, le Sénat de l'Université McGill a pour sa part banni de façon exceptionnelle tous les étudiants « d'origine raciale japonaise » en octobre 1943. S'appuyant sur des sources provenant des archives de l'Université McGill, du ministère des Affaires étrangères à Ottawa, des médias et d'entrevues avec des Canadiens d'origine japonaise, ma thèse montre la manière dont le Sénat a manipulé le règlement interne de l'Université et les conflits internes qui en ont résulté, la résistance des étudiants et du public face à cette décision, la menace d'interférence du conseil d'administration et, ultimement, la révocation de cette politique en 1945. Elle montre également que l'expulsion d'un étudiant de cette institution contraste avec la présence avérée d'au moins sept Canadiens d'origine japonaise sur le campus pendant la période de mise vigueur de cette politique. Ce déni du droit d'accès à l'éducation supérieure s'inscrit plus largement dans le processus de dépossession des Canadiens d'origine japonaise qui a cours au Canada pendant la décennie 1940.

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## Introduction

When Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King announced on 25 February 1942 that all Japanese Canadians<sup>1</sup> would be expelled from a hundred mile wide restricted zone along the Pacific Coast, 76 Japanese Canadian students were registered at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver.<sup>2</sup> Fourteen would graduate that spring; the remaining students were left to abandon their studies or transfer to other Canadian universities.

In the fall of 1942, Queen's University and the University of Toronto turned away Japanese Canadian students, but by 1943 both institutions admitted them alongside the University of Alberta, the University of Saskatchewan, and the University of Manitoba.<sup>3</sup> McGill University distinguished itself by legislating the total exclusion of Japanese Canadian students on racial grounds. On 20 October 1943, McGill's Senate decided, by a vote of 11 to 9, that "it is inadvisable to admit any students of Japanese racial origin to the undergraduate courses of the University during the present war."<sup>4</sup> McGill administrators singled out Japanese Canadians on

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<sup>1</sup> I use the term 'Japanese Canadian' with the understanding that it is imperfect. Identifying language evolves over time, and 'Japanese Canadian' may have different meanings according to generational, cultural, and political context. For more analysis, see Roy Miki, "Turning In, Turning Out: The Shifting Formations of 'Japanese Canadian' from Uprooting to Redress," in *Situating: Critical Essays for Activists and Scholars*, ed. Jo-Anne Lee and John Lutz (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 94-113.

<sup>2</sup> Ann Gomer Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism: The Uprooting of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War* (Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1981), 39; *A Degree of Justice, 1942* (Vancouver: n.p., 2017), 10.

<sup>3</sup> *A Degree of Justice*, 41, 64. Both Queen's and the University of Toronto registered Japanese Canadian students for the fall term of 1942 but yielded to pressure from Premier Mitchell Hepburn, university governors, and alumni groups to turn these students away.

<sup>4</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 20 October 1943, Senate Minute Book 1943 to 1945, RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, McGill University Archives, Montreal, Quebec (MUA).

racial grounds, ignoring students of Italian and German descent whom the federal government had also declared “enemy aliens.”<sup>5</sup>

### **A Controversial Policy**

The McGill Senate passed its policy under controversial circumstances. The first time the Senate discussed admitting Japanese Canadian students, on 30 September 1943, they voted by a margin of 11 to 10 for a restrictive but not totally exclusive policy. Encouraged by the Dean of Arts and Sciences, Cyrus Macmillan, and the Board of Governors, Principal Frank Cyril James facilitated the overturning of the first policy at the following Senate meeting. To prevent the opponents of racial exclusion from repealing the second policy, Senate protocols were rewritten to stop any decision from being repealed with less than a two-thirds majority.<sup>6</sup>

McGill’s racial exclusion of Japanese Canadians was not inevitable. Principal James, the Board of Governors, and a faction of Senate members devoted substantial energy to the project of passing and defending their racist policy. In 1967, former McGill professor John Hughes, who had represented the Faculty of Arts and Science at the Senate in 1943, recalled the meetings about Japanese Canadian admissions in a letter to the *Montreal Star* titled “Fight for Japanese Canadians’ Rights Won in Part in McGill University.” He wrote that,

Those of us who served in the Senate fought the matter vigorously, claiming that it was monstrously unjust to refuse admission to these fully-qualified Canadian-born matriculants, because they had chosen the wrong parents and ancestry. I vividly recall the first round of

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<sup>5</sup> For a more detailed comparison of Japanese Canadian and Italian Canadian internment, see Franca Iacovetta, Roberto Perin, and Angelo Principe, eds. *Enemies Within: Italian and Other Internees in Canada and Abroad* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 122-124.

<sup>6</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 30 September 1943, Senate Minute Book, 1943 to 1945, RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA; F.C. James, “Summary from Governors,” 13 October 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA; McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 19 January 1944, Senate Minute Book, 1943 to 1945, RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA.

that battle. A then Governor of the University, a top-ranking leader in Canadian business and a man whom my professional colleagues and I had learned to like and respected astounded and disappointed us by angrily demanding the rejection of these fully-qualified young Canadians on grounds that had no basis other than war-time mass hysteria. He obviously regarded our attitude as ‘unpatriotic.’<sup>7</sup>

After the Senate’s racist faction managed to pass the policy, the University kept it secret for a year. In October 1944, however, the Montreal Diocesan Theological College Alumni Association published a resolution condemning McGill’s decision to ban Japanese Canadians, informing the student community and national media.<sup>8</sup> The Students’ Society, *McGill Daily*, and a Japanese Canadian alumna, Betty Kobayashi, condemned the policy, as did the national student press and the Japanese Canadian national newspaper, the *New Canadian*.<sup>9</sup>

Principal James responded to public opposition by disclaiming responsibility and pretending that McGill’s racial exclusion policy had nothing to do with race. In a letter to the Principal in 1945, Glen Thomson, a grade twelve student from Davidson, Saskatchewan, wrote of the Senate’s ban,

does not this act, which you have carried out, violate the very foundational rights for which so many gallant Canadian boys have given their lives? In saying Canadian boys I include Canadian-born Japanese, for they are as true Canadians as you or I. [...] Perhaps if you had lost a brother as myself you would not be so careless in flinging overboard those ideals for which they have given their lives and part of ours.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> John Hughes, “Fight for Japanese Canadians’ Rights Won In Part In McGill University,” *Montreal Star*, 20 January 1967. The governor Hughes refers to is probably Arthur Wood, then President of Sun Life, and one of the most vocal promoters of racial exclusion.

<sup>8</sup> “McGill Bars Jap Students,” *Vancouver Sun*, 20 October 1944.

<sup>9</sup> “Students’ Council Announces Amalgamated Charities Drive To Begin Nov. 20 for One Week,” *McGill Daily*, 2 November 1944; “Bigotry at McGill,” *Varsity*, 27 October 1944; “Miss Kobayashi Addresses SLC In Union Grill,” *McGill Daily*, 10 November 1944; “Montreal: McGill University Bars Niseis, Manitoba Enrollment Doubled,” *New Canadian*, 28 October 1944.

<sup>10</sup> Letter, Glen Thompson to F.C. James, 21 January 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.



The Principal, who had arguably personally orchestrated the passing of the Senate's racial exclusion policy, dismissed Thompson's argument, assuring him that,

The decision regarding the admission or exclusion of Canadian-born Japanese students does not rest with me; it is a matter which is being very carefully considered by about fifty men who are responsible for guiding the policies of this University, decision which was taken last year was not, I assure you, based on racial prejudice: a university does not have such feelings, even in war time.<sup>11</sup>

At the Senate, the battle over exclusion resumed and the arrival of Law Professor Frank Scott shifted the balance of power. McGill's governors had long resented Scott, a renowned civil libertarian, for co-founding the irreverent *Fortnightly Review* as a student in the 1920s and espousing leftist political views as a faculty member in the 1930s. Scott had most recently provoked consternation by expressing sympathy for French Canadian opposition to conscription and becoming national chairman of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, the precursor to the New Democratic Party.<sup>12</sup>

In the winter of 1945, Scott and his allies, including Professors Edward Adair and William Woodhead, managed to amend the rules of protocol. The Senate officially overturned the ban on 21 February 1945.<sup>13</sup> The Principal and Vice Chancellor concealed Senate's decision from the public, and, in an effort to stall its implementation, appointed a joint committee between the Senate and Board of Governors to 'study' the issue.<sup>14</sup> Despite the delay, McGill's ban was

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<sup>11</sup> Letter, F.C. James to Glen Thompson, 26 January 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>12</sup> Sandra Djwa, *The Politics of the Imagination: A Life of F.R. Scott* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987), 94, 130, 158, 200, 238. The *Fortnightly Review* ran from 1925 to 1927.

<sup>13</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 17 January 1945; McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 21 February 1945, Senate Minute Book 1943 to 1945, RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA.

<sup>14</sup> McGill Board of Governors Meeting Minutes, 9 May 1945, RG 4, McGill University Governors Minutes, 10 January 1945 to June 16 1948, Board of Governors, MUA.

ultimately overturned and Japanese Canadian students were able to enroll for the fall term of 1945.

## **White Supremacy and Resistance**

McGill's racial exclusion of Japanese Canadian students offers an essential case study in the maintenance of white supremacy at one of Canada's most prestigious educational institutions. The Orders-in-Council deployed against "persons of Japanese Racial Origin" empowered white Canadian politicians, civil servants, and citizens to reductively define Japanese Canadians in racial terms.<sup>15</sup> McGill's ban can also be understood as just one example of a cascade of racist local policies resulting from internment. Racist members of the University's Board of Governors and Senate felt emboldened to officially discriminate against academically qualified Japanese Canadian students, imagining them outside of the category of "our own boys and girls."<sup>16</sup>

The backlash against McGill's policy also offers us a case study in resistance to white supremacy in higher education among Japanese Canadians and the broader Canadian public. Japanese Canadians actively resisted the policy using all the tools available to them. Other members of the McGill community decried racism toward Japanese Canadians on ethical grounds. Explaining his opposition to "rigid exclusion," Genetics Professor C. Leonard Huskins summarized ethical arguments, writing,

Universities are, to me, institutions seeking Universals and therefore attempting to override minor variations of time and place, and minor differences whether national or ethnological between members of the human family. They must therefore always

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<sup>15</sup> Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism*, 38. Robert Miles defines racialization as "a dialectical process by which meaning is attributed to particular biological features of human beings, as a result of which individuals may be assigned to a general category of persons." Robert Miles, *Racism*, (London: Routledge, 1989), 102.

<sup>16</sup> Letter, A.B. Wood to F.C. James, 7 June 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

have what we may loosely call ‘liberal’ principles, in opposition to the more conservative and narrow principles which actuate men and institutions attuned to more primitive levels of human evolution.<sup>17</sup>

In 1943, McGill, like other Canadian post-secondary institutions, had a long history of carefully emphasizing ‘minor ethnological differences’ among applicants. Administrators’ efforts to conceal the barriers they imposed on Jewish applicants nonetheless demonstrate an awareness that such policies contradicted the ideals of higher education.<sup>18</sup> Vocal opposition to the racial exclusion of Japanese Canadians by McGill Senate members, faculty, and students further demonstrates that the project of racial exclusion was neither natural nor uncontested. Students linked the ban on Japanese Canadians to unofficial restrictions on Jewish enrolment, and framed their protest as loyalty to the university. McGill alumna Betty Kobayashi Issenman, who protested the policy in 1944, remembers thinking, “This isn’t McGill.”<sup>19</sup>

### **Japanese Canadian Internment Historiography**

In providing the first comprehensive study of McGill’s racial exclusion of Japanese Canadian students and subsequent resistance, this thesis enriches existing analysis of the university’s history of racial exclusion, its governing bodies, student politics, and renowned figures, including Principal Frank Cyril James, Dean Macmillan, and Professor Frank Scott. Furthermore, my research contributes to the broader historiography of Japanese Canadian

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<sup>17</sup> Letter, C. L. Huskins to W.W. Hatcher, 30 September 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>18</sup> For example, in 1937, Chancellor Sir Edward Beatty ordered acting Principal W.H. Brittain to lie to the *Jewish Advocate* about unofficial quotas. Michael Brown, “On Campus in the Thirties: Antipathy, Support, and Indifference,” in *Nazi Germany, Canadian Responses: Confronting Antisemitism in the Shadow of War*, ed. L. Ruth Klein (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2012), 159.

<sup>19</sup> Betty Kobayashi Issenman, interview by author, 14 May 2018.

internment, illuminating an understudied example of the methods by which individuals and institutions east of British Columbia denied Japanese Canadians their rights as British subjects, and Japanese Canadians' resistance to such infringements.

Historians first began publishing studies of Japanese Canadian internment in the 1970s. In 1976, Ken Adachi released *The Enemy That Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians*, a narrative beginning with the first wave of Japanese immigration to Canada in the 19th century. In 1981, Ann Gomer Sunahara published *The Politics of Racism: The Uprooting of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War*; the first history of internment written using then newly unsealed documents from the RCMP, military, British Columbia Security Commission, and numerous federal government departments. Adachi and Sunahara's foundational histories emphasize Japanese Canadians' loyalty to Canada, and the community's resistance to forced removal from their homes, dispossession, the separation of families, forced labour, incarceration, and the exile of nearly four thousand Canadians to war-torn Japan. Reflecting contemporary discussions of the FLQ crisis, both authors criticize the War Measures Act as a threat to human rights.<sup>20</sup>

Writing at the heyday of Canadian multiculturalism initiatives, Adachi and Sunahara frame internment as a "blessing in disguise" for a group that developed into a "model minority" based on high rates of post-secondary education and average income.<sup>21</sup> Adachi writes that, "[Japanese Canadians] have rapidly entered such secure and status fields as medicine, engineering, dentistry, architecture, law and teaching – a spectacular breakthrough for a minority

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<sup>20</sup> Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism*, 150; Ken Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), 368.

<sup>21</sup> Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was*, 355.

which had been barred in British Columbia by provincial statutes from several of those occupations, and for a people whose highest expectations might have been to achieve the level of auto-mechanics.”<sup>22</sup> Sunahara declares that, “Japanese Canadians have earned a reputation as a model minority: as quiet, hard-working, *well-educated*, prosperous and assimilated Canadians.”<sup>23</sup> A series of community based histories were published in the 1980s, echoing Adachi and Sunahara’s basic narrative and detailing Japanese Canadians’ experiences of internment across the country.<sup>24</sup>

Over the past two decades, scholars have expanded the historiography of internment, comparing Canadian and American policies, providing individual case studies of Japanese Canadian military veterans, analyzing the influence of gender, class, age, and location on individuals’ experiences, linking internment to Canadian settler colonialism, prioritizing oral histories, memory projects, and commemoration, and cataloguing dispossession.<sup>25</sup> Historians

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 359.

<sup>23</sup> Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism*, 1. Emphasis added.

<sup>24</sup> See Roy Ito, *We Went to War: The Story of the Japanese Canadians Who Served during the First and Second World Wars* (Stittsville, Ontario: Canada’s Wings, 1984); Japanese Canadian Centennial Project Committee, *A Dream of Riches: The Japanese Canadians, 1877-1977* (Vancouver: Japanese Canadian Centennial Project, 1978); Muriel Kitagawa, Wesley Fujiwara, and Roy Miki, *This Is My Own: Letters to Wes and Other Writings on Japanese Canadians, 1941-1948* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1985).

<sup>25</sup> See Mona Oikawa, *Cartographies of Violence: Japanese Canadian Women, Memory, and the Subjects of Internment*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012; Lyle Dick, “Sergeant Masumi Mitsui and the Japanese Canadian War Memorial,” *Canadian Historical Review* 91, no. 3 (September 2010): 435-463; David Dowe, “The Protestant Churches and the Resettlement of Japanese Canadians in Urban Ontario, 1942-1955,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 39, no. ½ (2007): 51-77; Louis Fiset and Gail M. Nomura, *Nikkei in the Pacific Northwest: Japanese Americans and Japanese Canadians in the Twentieth Century* (Seattle: Center for the Study of the Pacific Northwest in Association with University of Washington Press, 2005); Aya Fujiwara, “Japanese-Canadian Internally Displaced Persons: Labour Relations and Ethno-Religious Identity in Southern Alberta, 1942-1953,” *Labour/Le Travail* 69 (Spring 2012): 63-89; Masumi Izumi, “The Japanese Canadian Movement: Migration and Activism Before and After World War II,” *Amerasia* 33, no. 2 (1 August 2007): 49-66; Stephanie Bangarth, *Voices Raised in*

writing in the post-redress era resist homogenous representations of internment. Mona Oikawa argues that, “the people who were interned and their experiences of the Internment can never be exhaustively represented or known.”<sup>26</sup> Pamela Sugiman writes that, “the government’s actions resulted in dispossession, property loss (farms, fishing boats, vehicles, homes, and personal belongings of less monetary worth but great personal value), a violation of human rights, *disruption of education, diminished aspirations*, coerced employment (often highly exploitative in nature and typically for low pay and little recognition), the break-up of families, loss of culture (language, customs, art forms), and continued exposure to racism in its many guises.”<sup>27</sup>

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*Protest: Defending North American Citizens of Japanese Ancestry, 1942-1949* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009); Tatsuo Kage, *Uprooted Again: Japanese Canadians Move to Japan after World War II*, Translated by Kathleen Chisato Merken (Victoria: Ti-Jean Press, 2012); Audrey Kobayashi, Reuben Rose-Redwood, Sonja Aagesen and the Landscapes of Injustice Research Collective, “Exile: Mapping the Migration Patterns of Japanese Canadians Exiled to Japan in 1946,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 37, no. 4 (Summer 2018): 73-89; Kirsten Emiko McAllister, *Terrain of Memory: A Japanese Canadian Memorial Project*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010); Kirsten Emiko McAllister, “Narrating Japanese Canadians in and out of the Canadian Nation: A Critique of Realist Forms of Representation,” *Canadian Journal of Communication* 24, no. 1 (1999); Peter Neary, “Zennosuke Inouye’s Land: A Canadian Veterans Affairs Dilemma,” *Canadian Historical Review* 85 (2004): 423-450; Greg Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy: Japanese Confinement in North America* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2009); Pamela Sugiman, “‘Life is Sweet’: Vulnerability and Composure in the Wartime Narratives of Japanese Canadians,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 43, no. 1 (2009): 186-218; Pamela Sugiman, “‘A Million Hearts from Here’: Japanese Canadian Mothers and Daughters and the Lessonsof War,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* (Summer 2007): 50-68; Pamela Sugiman, “These Feelings That Fill My Heart: Japanese Canadian Women’s Memories of Internment,” *Oral History* 34 (2006): 69-84; Pamela Sugiman, “Passing Time, Moving Memories: Interpreting Wartime Narratives of Japanese Canadian Women,” *Histoire sociale/Social History* 37 (May 2004): 50-79; Pamela Sugiman, “Memories of Internment: Narrating Japanese Canadian Women’s Life Stories,” *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 29, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 359-388.

<sup>26</sup> Oikawa, *Cartographies of Violence*, 6.

<sup>27</sup> Sugiman, “Passing Time,” 55. Emphasis added. Sugiman also refers to interview subjects’ emphasis on “stunted aspirations” and “denial of opportunity” in Sugiman, “‘Life is Sweet,” 193.

Sugiman and other historians of Japanese Canadian internment contextualize loss of educational opportunities as part of broader dispossession.

Education can be understood as a form of property. In “Whiteness as Property,” Cheryl Harris unpacks the racialization of property in the United States, building on Charles Reich’s definition of property, which “[in a] broader sense encompassed jobs, entitlements, occupational licenses, contracts, subsidies, and indeed a whole host of intangibles that are the product of labor, time and creativity, such as intellectual property, business goodwill, and *enhanced earning potential from graduate degrees*.”<sup>28</sup>

McGill University’s exclusion policy can be understood within such a broader pattern of racialized educational dispossession. When the Canadian government dispossessed all Canadians “of Japanese racial origin,” it seized their land, businesses, houses, boats, and cars, and forced them to sell or abandon anything they could not carry by hand.<sup>29</sup> In addition to property and chattels, Japanese Canadians were also robbed of other markers of liberal citizenship - including the right to education. For Japanese Canadians in the 1940s, educational dispossession included

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<sup>28</sup> Cheryl I. Harris, “Whiteness As Property,” *Harvard Law Review* 106, no. 8 (June 1993): 1728. Emphasis added.

<sup>29</sup> For more on the dispossession of Japanese Canadians, see Jordan Stanger-Ross, Will Archibald, and the Landscapes of Injustice Research Collective, “The Unfaithful Custodian: Glenn McPherson and the Dispossession of Japanese Canadians in the 1940s,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 37, no. 4 (Summer 2018): 40-72; Jordan Stanger-Ross and Pamela Sugiman, eds, *Witness to Loss: Race, Culpability, and Memory in the Dispossession of Japanese Canadians*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2017); Jordan Stanger-Ross, Nicholas Blomley and the Landscapes of Injustice Research Collective, “‘My Land Is Worth a Million Dollars’: How Japanese Canadians Contested their Dispossession in the 1940s,” *Law and History Review* 35 no. 3 (August 2017): 711-751; Eric M. Adams, Jordan Stanger-Ross, and the Landscapes of Injustice Research Collective, “Promises of Law: The Unlawful Dispossession of Japanese Canadians,” *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 54, no. 3 (Spring 2017): 687-739; Oikawa, *Cartographies of Violence*; Audrey Kobayashi, “The Japanese Canadian Redress Settlement and Its Implications for ‘Race Relations’,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 24, no. 1 (1992): 1-20.

the abrupt closure of Japanese language schools, resulting in language loss, the refusal of the provincial government of British Columbia to provide elementary and high school education to Japanese Canadian children in internment camps, barriers to elementary and high school education in other provinces, and denial of post-secondary opportunities.<sup>30</sup>

### **Archival Sources and Limitations**

While I began my research with files from the Principal's office, I aimed to use the widest possible range of sources, bringing archives from UBC and different Japanese Canadian communities into conversation with documents from McGill's collection. To learn more about Japanese Canadians' experiences with post-secondary education in the 1940s and their responses to McGill's racial exclusion policy, I turned to a variety of archival collections including extensive materials held by the UBC Rare Books and Special Collections.<sup>31</sup> I noted relevant coverage in the *New Canadian* newspaper. In the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal Fonds, also housed in the McGill University Archives, I reviewed Montreal's Japanese Canadian community newspaper, the *Bulletin*, and biographical files containing interviews with Japanese

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<sup>30</sup> For more on the closure of Japanese language schools, see Oikawa, *Cartographies of Violence*, 237, 260; for more on exiled Japanese Canadian children's education in British Columbia, see Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy*, 201; Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism*, 76, 83; for more on barriers to elementary and high school education outside British Columbia, see Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism*, 72-75.

<sup>31</sup> In particular, I reviewed the UBC Japanese Canadian Students of 1942 interview collection, including interviews conducted in 2012 with former UBC students Mits Sumiya, Jack Kobayshi, Kiyoshi Shimizu, Frederick Yoshihide Sasaki, Akira Namba, Shinko Mary Nagata (Kato), Ruth Fusako Nagata (Cezar), F. Richard (Dick) Shiozaki, Geri T. Nikaido (Shiozaki), Yoichi Kato, Roy Shinobu, Teiso Edward Uyeno, Ted (Teruo) Harada, Tomi-taro Nishio, Nori Nishio, and Roy Oshiro.



Canadian Montrealers, including graduates of UBC and McGill.<sup>32</sup> I searched these files for references to UBC, McGill, and general comments about post-secondary education.

I searched for references to Japanese Canadian students and McGill's exclusion policy in over a dozen Canadian daily newspapers. I reviewed student newspapers including the *McGill Daily*, *The Ubyyssey*, *The Varsity*, *The Manitoban*, and the *Sheaf*. I noted mentions of McGill's policy in *Time* and *Saturday Night*. I consulted federal government records to find mention of the policy.<sup>33</sup>

At the Nikkei National Museum, I accessed the Tadashi Jack & Kanaye Kay Kagetsu Fonds, which contain documents Tadashi Jack Kagetsu collected as he wrote his father's biography. In this collection I acquired the International Student Service survey of Japanese Canadian students in 1942 regarding their future plans.<sup>34</sup> I also reviewed the Nikkei National Museum digital database for references to McGill and former McGill and UBC students. Finally, I contacted McGill alumna Betty Kobayashi Issenman, who generously agreed to be interviewed about her recollections of McGill's policy.

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<sup>32</sup> "Japanese Canadians - Quebec - Research - Miscellaneous (ca 1970s-80s)," Container 35, File 19; Japanese Canadians - Quebec - Student Research Project (1982-1985)," Container 35, File 21, MG 4247, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal Fonds, MUA. The interviews were collected in the 1980s as part of a two year history project documenting Japanese Canadians' experiences in Quebec. Students conducted interviews under the supervision of anthropologist Keibo Oiwa. The JCCCM History Committee consisted of Shima Okuda, Jackie Stevens, Cindy Henmi and Rei Nakashima.

<sup>33</sup> In the Department of External Affairs records at Library and Archives Canada (LAC), I acquired File 3464-W-40, "Attendance at Canadian Universities of Persons of Japanese Race." This file contains documents confirming the official policy taken by the Canadian federal government and communicated to McGill registrar T.H. Matthews in the fall of 1942.

<sup>34</sup> "Information about the Students of Japanese Racial Origin who were in attendance at the University of British Columbia, 1941-42 term," nd, Box 10, Folder Vol 44 Docs UBC, Tadashi Jack & Kanaye Kay Kagetsu Fonds, Nikkei National Museum (NNM), Burnaby B.C. Many thanks to Linda Kawamoto Reid for her help.

As my project focused on both the workings of and resistance to white supremacy at McGill University during the Second World War, I married my investigations into student experiences with a close analysis of the institutional records preserved in the McGill University Archives. I did so with anthropologist Michel Rolph-Trouillot's cautionary words in mind. In his study of the making and narrating of history, Trouillot explains that, "Silences enter the process of historical production at four crucial moments: the moment of fact creation (the making of *sources*); the moment of fact assembly (the making of *archives*); the moment of fact retrieval (the making of *narratives*); and the moment of retrospective significance (the making of *history* in the final instance)." <sup>35</sup>

In examining institutional records around the policy on Japanese Canadian students, I kept the idea of created silences in mind. To understand how and why McGill University's Senate banned students "of Japanese racial origin" from admission on 20 October 1943, I turned first to the records of the Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, including two relevant files, File 1692 "Admissions: Policy re Japanese;" and File 3036 "Japanese Students." <sup>36</sup> These files primarily contain pertinent correspondence between the Principal and governors, the registrar, faculty, government representatives, alumni, and other Canadian university administrators. As of 2019, some documents in these files remain redacted. <sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 26.

<sup>36</sup> "Admissions: Policy re Japanese (1942-1944)," RG 2, Container 82, File 1692; "Japanese Students, (1940-1946)," RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>37</sup> Most notably, several paragraphs are redacted from Memo, T.H. Matthews to F.C. James, 14 February 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

I searched for references to Japanese Canadians and ‘enemy aliens’ in the Principal’s files relating to buildings and grounds, the National Research Council, the Canadian Officers’ Training Corps, the National War Service Regulations, the War Service Advisory Board, admissions, student clubs, academic freedom of speech, bequests, gifts, scholarships, and research grants, and numerous faculties and staff members.

I found material in Principal James’s diaries from the Frank Cyril James Fonds, including his personal observations of Senate and Board of Governors meetings. Unfortunately, James appears not to have written in his diary between 1 September and 3 December 1943, leaving no entries regarding the Senate meetings of 30 September and 20 October.<sup>38</sup> In his diaries I found appointment books listing his scheduled meetings; from these I was able to determine that Professor Forrest LaViolette never made a formal appointment with the Principal to discuss the admission of Japanese Canadian students before the racial exclusion policy was passed.<sup>39</sup>

I also looked for references to Japanese Canadian students in files from Dean Cyrus Macmillan’s Fonds and Dean David Landsborough Thomson’s Fonds but found nothing relevant. In the Francis Reginald Scott Fonds at Library and Archives Canada, I searched a file titled ‘Japanese Canadians’ but found no reference to McGill’s policy.<sup>40</sup> I came across references to McGill in correspondence from Forrest LaViolette’s collection at Tulane University.<sup>41</sup> At the McGill University Archives, I also examined minutes from the Board of Governors and Senate,

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<sup>38</sup> Diary of Frank Cyril James, “1 July 1943 - 6 December 1943,” MG 1017, Container 47, Frank Cyril James Fonds, MUA.

<sup>39</sup> “Appointments 1943;” “Appointments 1945,” MG 1017, Container 49, Frank Cyril James Fonds, MUA.

<sup>40</sup> “Japanese Canadians,” Item 2751317, MG 30 - D211, Box 17, Francis Reginald Scott Fonds, LAC.

<sup>41</sup> Box 1, Folder 1, Forrest E. LaViolette papers, Manuscripts Collection 295, Louisiana Research Collection, HTML.

the Canadian Officers Training Corps historical record books, and COTC member lists. I found information about Japanese Canadian students in McGill's *Student Directory* and in digitized copies of *Old McGill*, the yearbook.

In considering the nature of historical silences, Trouillot writes that, "the presences and absences embodied in sources (artifacts and bodies that turn an event into fact) or archives (facts collected, thematized, and processed as documents and monuments) are neither neutral or natural. They are created."<sup>42</sup> I encountered one particularly glaring absence in McGill's collection. The archivists attempted to locate File 303 from the Office of the Registrar, "Correspondence Concerning the Admission or Rejection of Japanese-Canadian Students (1943-1945)." After a long search, assistant archivist Julien Couture finally confirmed that, "It seems that Container 112 [which held File 303] has been missing since 2006. It either has been destroyed or it is simply lost [...] We are trying to see if the container has been sent to destruction or not [...] we would need a miracle to find it."<sup>43</sup>

File 303 may never be found. If, in the 61 years between its creation and destruction, professional historians writing about McGill had shown an interest in exploring the university's exclusion of Japanese Canadians, its contents would not have disappeared without ever having been shared.

Archival research inevitably prompts more questions, and more reminders of the limits of bureaucratic documentation. While the Principal left notes in his diary about conversations he had about the policy with his allies over lunch, there are no accessible records of other McGill

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<sup>42</sup> Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 48.

<sup>43</sup> "Correspondence Concerning the Admission or Rejection of Japanese-Canadian Students," RG 7, Container 112, File 303, Office of the Registrar, MUA; Email, Julien Couture to Laura Madokoro, 3 October 2018.

community members' informal discussions. I found no textual documentation of McGill's Japanese Canadian students' contemporary responses to the passing of the racial exclusion policy and subsequent expulsion of Science student Ryo Otsuki. Despite these archival absences, available documents did allow me to determine who advocated for and against McGill's ban on Japanese Canadian admissions, how it came to be passed and eventually rescinded at the Senate, who was forced to leave McGill, who managed to stay, and how the public reacted.

### **A Historiographical Gap**

McGill's racial exclusion of Japanese Canadians remains understudied by historians concerned with the university's past. R.C. Fetherstonhaugh and Stanley Brice Frost describe the legacy of McGill's remarkable wartime mobilization at length in their respective histories.<sup>44</sup> Neither narrative acknowledges the university's racist admissions policy or its impact on Senate rules of protocol and student activism.

Frost, in particular, did not fail to include this event in his narrative of McGill's history for lack of sources. He had access to the two aforementioned Principal's files, along with the now destroyed File 303 "Correspondence Concerning the Admission or Rejection of Japanese-Canadian Students."<sup>45</sup> All three files were listed in the university's archival catalogue

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<sup>44</sup> R.C. Fetherstonhaugh, *McGill University at War: 1914-1918, 1939-1945*, Montreal: McGill University, 1947; Stanley Brice Frost, *McGill University: For the Advancement of Learning, Volume II, 1895-1971*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984. In *McGill: The Story of a University*, edited by Hugh MacLennan, former Principal Frank Cyril James additionally describes the legacy of measures taken to accommodate veterans. Frank Cyril James, "The Link with the Future, 1945-1959," in *McGill: The Story of a University*, ed. Hugh MacLennan (London: Allen and Unwin, 1960), 115. For further analysis of McGill's use of its war records, see Gordon Burr and Francois Dansereau, "McGill Remembers: The Commemoration of Three Wars through War Records at McGill," *Fontanus* 14 (2016): 1-15.

<sup>45</sup> "Correspondence Concerning the Admission or Rejection of Japanese-Canadian Students," RG 7, Container 112, File 303, Office of the Registrar, MUA.

when Frost researched McGill's history in the 1970s and 1980s. He equally had access to the *McGill Daily's* ample coverage of student responses to the racial exclusion policy in the 1944-45 academic year. Given Frost's exhaustive attention to detail and acknowledgement of other unflattering aspects of McGill's past, his silence regarding the exclusion of Japanese Canadian students between October 1943 and September 1945 appears deliberate.

The first published reference to the exclusion policy came from McGill Sociology professor, Japanese American internment camp administrator, and co-founder of the Montreal Committee for Japanese Canadians, Forrest LaViolette. He described events at McGill in an appendix about university students in his 1948 book, *The Canadian Japanese and World War II: A Sociological and Psychological Account*:

Because of internal security regulations of the federal government certain students were not to be admitted to the buildings where vital war research was under way. This necessitated setting up certain restrictions, and by the time these had been established, the first applicants had not been admitted. Later the Board of Governors and the Faculty could not arrive at a satisfactory arrangement. This delay gave an opportunity for a movement to develop among the students asking for more liberal consideration and for outsiders also to take issue. The *New Canadian* played the McGill problem with headlines regarding 'bigotry.' In the spring of 1945 the issue had been settled, allowing Canadians of Japanese ancestry to enter the university, provided that they were recommended by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, were academically qualified, and did not prevent some ex-military person from entering classes. This last qualification applied, of course, to all civilians. Since fighting with Japan ceased in the summer of 1945, there was no longer any question at McGill University, although news about its delay in resolving the issue travelled as far away as Chile in South America.<sup>46</sup>

LaViolette had supported student protests against the exclusion policy behind the scenes, but in his rendition of events, he uncritically repeats exclusionist Senate members' false claims

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<sup>46</sup> Forrest LaViolette, *The Canadian Japanese and World War II: A Sociological and Psychological Account* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press: 1948): 307. LaViolette had briefly referred to Japanese Canadian university students in two articles for *Far Eastern Survey*: Forrest LaViolette, "Japanese Evacuation in Canada," *Far Eastern Survey* 11, no. 15 (27 July 1942): 163; Forrest LaViolette, "Two Years of Japanese Evacuation in Canada," *Far Eastern Survey* 13, no. 11 (31 May 1944): 96.

about government instructions. Former activist Cyril Powles recalls that LaViolette criticized his family for their lack of “critical objectivity” regarding Japanese Canadian civil rights.<sup>47</sup> In his summary of the racial exclusion policy, however, he falls short of providing a critical, transparent perspective. LaViolette presents McGill’s Senate as a passive entity; he fails to describe the debate between racist senate members and their opponents, or the exclusionist faction’s anti-democratic manipulation of Senate protocols. He appears more alarmed by the tone of the *New Canadian*’s criticism than the policy itself.<sup>48</sup> Despite these stark limitations, his acknowledgement of McGill’s policy provided a foundation for future scholars.

Ken Adachi refers to LaViolette’s summary in *The Enemy That Never Was*, writing, “McGill University, despite protests by its student body, did not accept Nisei<sup>49</sup> until the fall of 1945 because ‘vital war research’ was being pursued there.” Adachi also discusses a letter to the editor of *Time* magazine in January 1945 from American novelist Pearl Buck, in which she wrote, “McGill bars [Japanese Canadians] on the frank contention that serfs of an inferior race deserve no education.”<sup>50</sup>

Citing LaViolette, Elaine Bernard refers to McGill’s racial exclusion policy in her 1977 study of the Japanese Canadian students forced to leave UBC, writing that, “McGill University, on the basis of security, refused admission to Japanese Canadians until the spring of 1945. It seems that, due to federal government regulations, Japanese Canadian students could not be

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<sup>47</sup> Interview with Cyril Powles and Marjorie Powles conducted by Sandra Kawaii and Melissa Steele, December 1986, MG 4247, Container 33, Box 25, File 16, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal Fonds, MUA.

<sup>48</sup> LaViolette’s paternalistic judgment of Japanese Canadians’ alleged ‘bitterness’, ‘resentment,’ and ‘hostility’ to internment is a consistent theme in his book. LaViolette, *The Canadian Japanese and World War II*, 55, 65, 83, 105-107, 159-167, 176.

<sup>49</sup> The term ‘Nisei’ refers to second generation Japanese Canadians.

<sup>50</sup> Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was*, 265-266.

admitted to buildings where vital war research was being carried on [...] A movement developed both on and off the campus asking for a more liberal policy.” Bernard complicates LaViolette’s summary, adding that, “[building regulations] would restrict Japanese Canadian attendance, but certainly was not a sufficient cause for total exclusion.” Her appendices include statistics about the UBC students’ academic records and Canadian Officers Training Corps cadet numbers.<sup>51</sup>

Bernard’s article serves as an important secondary source for scholars researching the experiences of Japanese Canadian university students.<sup>52</sup> In his history of Canadian student life in the 1930s, Paul Axelrod briefly discusses discrimination against Japanese Canadian students in British Columbia; citing Bernard, he mentions McGill’s refusal to accept Japanese Canadian students in a footnote.<sup>53</sup>

Most recently, historian Greg Robinson briefly refers to McGill’s policy in several works. In a book chapter about Japanese Canadians’ relationships to French Canadians from 2008, Robinson writes,

The city’s politically dominant English community initially reacted to the newcomers with some hostility. In October 1944, [sic] McGill College, which was notorious for its longstanding discriminatory policies against Jews and other ethnic minorities, became the first Canadian university officially to close its doors to Japanese-Canadian students [...]

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<sup>51</sup> Elaine Bernard, “A University at War: Japanese Canadians at UBC During World War II,” *BC Studies* 35 (Autumn 1977): 49-50, 51-55.

<sup>52</sup> Bernard’s article is cited in Patricia E. Roy, “The Soldiers Canada Didn’t Want: Her Chinese and Japanese Citizens,” *Canadian Historical Review*, 59, no. 3 (September 1978): 341-358; Tadashi Jack Kagetsu, *The Tree Trunk Can Be My Pillow: The Biography of an Outstanding Japanese Canadian* (Victoria, B.C.: University of Victoria, 2017); Daniel Poitras, “Welcoming International and Foreign Students in Canada: Friendly Relations with Overseas Students at the University of Toronto, 1951-68,” *Canadian Historical Review* 100, no. 1 (March 2019): 22-45.

<sup>53</sup> Paul Axelrod, *Making A Middle Class: Student Life In English Canada During The Thirties* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990), 200. In an article commemorating McGill’s 175th anniversary, Axelrod later refers to discrimination against Japanese Canadian students in British Columbia without mentioning McGill’s own policy. Paul Axelrod, “McGill University On The Landscape of Higher Education: Historical Reflections,” *Fontanus* 10 (Montreal: McGill University Libraries, 1998): 28.



McGill's Students Society sponsored a mass meeting protesting the university's exclusion policy, and the university Senate voted to lift the exclusion in the autumn of 1945.<sup>54</sup>

Robinson also refers to McGill in two books published in 2012. In *Un drame de la Deuxième Guerre: Le sort de la minorité japonaise aux Etats-Unis et au Canada*, he again situates the university's exclusion of Japanese Canadians within a broader history of discrimination against Jews and other ethnic minorities. He describes the Students' Society protests, the indifference of the francophone press to events at McGill, and the acceptance of Japanese Canadian students at Sir George Williams University (the predecessor of Concordia University).<sup>55</sup>

In a chapter about Forrest LaViolette for *After Camp: Portraits of Midcentury Japanese American Life and Politics*, Robinson examines the Sociology professor's response to McGill's racist admissions policy. He notes that LaViolette may have attempted to help a Japanese Canadian acquaintance enroll at McGill, supported graduate student Kim Nakashima when he arrived at McGill in 1944, and "helped guide the protests by students and community activists that led to the successful repeal of the policy the following year."<sup>56</sup> Robinson observes that,

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<sup>54</sup> Greg Robinson, "Two Other Solitudes: Encounters between Japanese Canadians and French Canadians, 1900-1950," in *Contradictory Impulses: Canada and Japan in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Patricia Roy and Greg Donaghy, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 150-151. Note that McGill's Senate closed its doors to Japanese Canadians on 20 October 1943; the public learned about its policy in October 1944, which explains Robinson's error. His primary sources on McGill's policy are LaViolette and *Ganbari: Reclaiming Our Home* (Montreal: Montreal Japanese Canadian History Committee, 1998), 10-11.

<sup>55</sup> Greg Robinson, *Un drame de la Deuxième Guerre: Le sort de la minorité japonaise aux Etats-Unis et au Canada* (Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2012), 290-292.

<sup>56</sup> Greg Robinson, "Forrest LaViolette: Race, Internationalism, and Assimilation," in *After Camp: Portraits of Midcentury Japanese American Life and Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 40, 254. The Nisei acquaintance Robinson refers to is likely Noby Inamoto or Kunio Hidaka.

“while [LaViolette] made no public comment against the policy— no doubt he felt constrained by his position— he privately organized students and helped gain publicity for their efforts.”<sup>57</sup>

## Japanese Canadians Remember

Oikawa remarks that remembrance can be a practice of ‘insurgency,’ contesting others’ silence.<sup>58</sup> Japanese Canadian community historians remember the racial exclusion policy at McGill that LaViolette mischaracterized and Frost ignored. To mark the occasion of UBC’s 2012 acknowledgement of its complicity in 1942, Mary Kitagawa, Tosh Kitagawa, and the *Ubyyssey*, the University of British Columbia student newspaper, published *Return: A Commemorative Yearbook in Honour of the Japanese Canadian Students of 1942*, providing biographies for the 76 UBC students ordered to abandon their studies.<sup>59</sup> This text was updated and re-released in 2017 as *A Degree of Justice, 1942*.<sup>60</sup> The entry in *A Degree of Justice* for former UBC Commerce student Hideo Shigei refers to McGill’s ban, echoing Buck’s description in her letter to *Time*: “Shigei attended McGill University late in the 1940s. At first, McGill had denied Japanese Canadian students entrance because they were thought of as people of an inferior race.”

<sup>61</sup> Shigei’s biography in *A Degree of Justice* crucially links McGill’s racial exclusion policy to the experiences of UBC’s exiled Japanese Canadian students.

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<sup>57</sup> Robinson, “Forrest LaViolette,” 40.

<sup>58</sup> Oikawa, *Cartographies of Violence*, 89.

<sup>59</sup> *Return: A Commemorative Yearbook in Honour of the Japanese Canadian Students of 1942*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia in partnership with the Ubyyssey Publications Society: 2012. The biographies were written by the former students and their family members or compiled with their consultation.

<sup>60</sup> *A Degree of Justice, 1942*. Vancouver: n.p., 2017.

<sup>61</sup> *A Degree of Justice*, 127.

The Montreal Japanese Canadian History Committee also remembers McGill's racist admissions policy. The Committee constructed a timeline of events and filed copies of documents from the Principal's Office, Students' Executive Council, and relevant newspaper clippings.<sup>62</sup> In their 1998 history of Montreal's Japanese Canadian community, *Ganbari: Reclaiming Our Home*, they briefly described the incident:

In 1899, the first Japanese Canadian graduated from McGill. However in October 1944 [sic] McGill University's Senate voted to bar Japanese Canadians from studying at McGill. The Senate argued that since Japanese Canadians were not eligible for either service in the armed forces or placement in defense plants where university training was required, educating them in wartime was a waste of McGill's facilities.

Student groups from other Canadian universities and many church groups urged McGill's Senate to reconsider its decision, condemning its members for their bigotry. The McGill ban was finally revoked in September 1945. The other universities in Montreal, Sir George Williams (now Concordia University) and Université de Montréal, had no such exclusionary policies and continued to admit Japanese Canadians throughout the war. [Canon P.S.C. Powles's daughter] Joy mobilized the Students' Society to pressure McGill University to lift its ban on Japanese Canadian students, which it finally did in 1945.<sup>63</sup>

Though he does not mention McGill, Tadashi Jack Kagetsu discusses Japanese Canadian university students in his biography of his father Eikichi Kagetsu, *The Tree Trunk Can Be My Pillow*. Kagetsu describes his siblings' experiences at UBC and refers to the policies of the British Columbia Security Commission and the Department of External Affairs towards Japanese Canadian students. He is the first author to cite the Department of External Affairs Records' File

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<sup>62</sup> "McGill University - Admissions Policy, 1943-1945," MG 4247, Container 35, File 39, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal, MUA.

<sup>63</sup> *Ganbari: Reclaiming Our Home* (Montreal: Montreal Japanese Canadian History Committee, 1998): 10-11. According to the foreword, the text "was produced thanks to the collaboration of many individuals, including: Michael Fukushima, Ginette Houle-Tokawa, Sandra Kadowaki, Sandra Kawai, and Rei Nakashima." Christian Roy refers to *Ganbari*'s summary of events at McGill in his Ph.D. thesis. Christian Roy, "Histoire de la communauté japonaise du Québec, 1942-1988," (Ph.D. Thesis, Université du Québec, 2016), 157-162.

3464-W-40, “Attendance at Canadian Universities of Persons of Japanese Race,” confirming the official position taken by the Canadian federal government.<sup>64</sup>

## **Thesis Roadmap**

In Chapter 1, I describe the demographic of Japanese Canadian UBC students impacted by McGill’s racial exclusion policy. I explore the students’ ambitions, their exclusion from numerous professions, their social lives, relationships with professors, and participation in the Canadian Officers’ Training Corps. I analyze the effects of the arbitrary restrictions introduced immediately after 7 December 1941: the curfew, seizure of automobiles, abrupt detention of family members, the rushed departure of students who were brought from Japan to Canada in infancy, UBC’s expulsion of Japanese Canadian cadets from the COTC, the detention of students who refused to work in road camps, and the financial struggles resulting from dispossession. Finally, I discuss Japanese Canadian students’ attempts to transfer to other Canadian universities, the logistical and financial obstacles they faced, and the lure of McGill.

In Chapter 2, I describe university governance in the years leading up to the passing of McGill’s racial exclusion policy on in 1943. I explain the University’s history of precarious funding, its powerful Board of Governors, the influence of the Principal, and the marginalization of academic freedom. I explore McGill’s long tradition of unofficial ethnic exclusion, particularly in the case of Jewish students, and the University’s failure to welcome Jewish refugee scholars during the Second World War despite urging from the Canadian Society for the

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<sup>64</sup> Tadashi Jack Kagetsu, *The Tree Trunk Can Be My Pillow: The Biography of an Outstanding Japanese Canadian* (Victoria, B.C.: University of Victoria, 2017), 86, 163, 170, 174-175, 187.

Protection of Science and Learning. Finally, I provide a brief history of Japanese Canadian students' enrollment at McGill in 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s.

In Chapter 3, I examine the escalation of anti-Japanese policies at McGill from December 1941 to the end of 1943. I explain how Principal James affirmed on 8 December 1941 that Japanese Canadian students ought to remain on campus and train in the COTC before he succumbed to pressure from racist faculty and governors. I outline the hostile positions taken by the Dean of Arts and Sciences, Cyrus Macmillan, the Dean of Engineering, J.J. O'Neill, and governor A.B. Wood. I describe registrar T.H. Matthews' efforts to admit Japanese Canadian students, British Columbia Security Commission officer G.E. Trueman's advocacy for UBC's exiled Japanese Canadian students, and the Canadian Department of External Affairs' decision to abandon them. I summarize the first Senate meeting on 30 September 1943, at which a restrictive but not totally exclusive policy was passed, resistance to exclusion from Dean of Graduate studies D.L. Thomson and Professors Hebbel Hoff and William Woodhead, and the Principal's orchestration of a second Senate meeting on 20 October, at which the racial exclusion policy was passed.

In Chapter 4, I describe the amendment of the Senate's Rules of Procedure to prevent the repeal of the racist decision, the publicization of McGill's policy in October 1944, and resulting condemnation from the Students' Society, alumni and the public. I describe renewed efforts from Professors Edward Adair, William Woodhead, Frank Scott, and their allies to overturn the policy, beginning at the Senate meeting of 15 November 1944. I review the Principal's correspondence with administrators at other Canadian universities. I describe Scott's passing of an amendment to Senate rules of protocol on 17 January 1945, allowing the repeal of the racial exclusion policy

with a simple majority vote at the Senate meeting of 21 February. Finally, I explore efforts by the Principal and Board of Governors to stall the decision with a joint conference committee until September 1945.

In my epilogue, I emphasize the unquantifiable loss resulting from the termination of Japanese Canadians' education. I describe the effect of McGill's policy, contrasting the arbitrary expulsion of Science student Ryo Otsuki with the continuing presence of other Japanese Canadian students at McGill during the period of official exclusion. I detail Japanese Canadian McGill students' records with the Canadian Officers' Training Corps. I revisit racist senate members' justifications, contrasting their claims about military service, agricultural labour, and the displacement of veterans with the experiences of students and their families.

In 1947, the Department of Labour would issue a report on the 're-establishment' of Japanese Canadians, in which it shared that nearly two hundred Japanese Canadian students were then enrolled at universities and colleges east of the Rockies. The report claimed that internment and exile,

have promoted a tendency among Japanese parents to keep their children in educational institutions longer in order to fit them better for postwar life. Increasing numbers of Canadian-born (Nisei) Japanese children are completing public schools, attending high schools and going on to universities. A few are taking specialized college training in the United States. Many others are enrolled in trade schools, business colleges, night classes, adult education groups and correspondence courses. The recognition is prevalent that educational qualifications and special training are particularly valuable to citizens of a minority group. Canadian students of Japanese origin have won increasing numbers of awards in high schools, colleges and universities in the last few years [...] now people of Japanese origin are practicing medicine, dentistry, teaching, engineering, law, commercial work, etc. in various provinces.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> *Report of the Department of Labour on the Re-Establishment of Japanese in Canada, 1944-1946*, (Ottawa, Canada: Dept. of Labour, 1947): 21-22.

The Department of Labour's report neglects to acknowledge that internment interrupted Japanese Canadian UBC students' careers and gave other Canadian universities the pretext to racially exclude Japanese Canadian students. This thesis reminds readers that Japanese Canadians' quest for university education was littered with obstacles, including official exclusion from one of Canada's top educational institutions, and that they resisted those obstacles as best they could.

In 2012, after years of lobbying from activist Mary Kitagawa, UBC finally granted honorary degrees to the 76 Japanese Canadian students exiled in 1942.<sup>66</sup> As McGill University approaches its bicentennial in 2020, it would be timely for the Senate to finally acknowledge its own unjustified racial exclusion of Japanese Canadian students between 1942 and 1945.

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<sup>66</sup> *A Degree of Justice*, 10-11.

## Chapter 1: Japanese Canadian Students in British Columbia

*“Defer not till tomorrow, for tomorrow’s sun may never rise.”*<sup>67</sup>

In this chapter, to understand the students impacted by McGill’s racial exclusion policy, I provide a brief history of Japanese Canadian students’ post-secondary experiences leading up to their expulsion from the Pacific coast. The path to university was strewn with obstacles; as former Arts student Mary Shinko Nagata (Kato) recalls, “It was such a rare opportunity for Japanese Canadian students to go to university. It was expensive, it meant sacrifices and also we were bucking a trend.”<sup>68</sup>

### A History of Exclusion

Anti-Japanese and anti-Asian discrimination had long impacted Nikkei access to post-secondary education in British Columbia. As Ken Adachi, Patricia Roy, Ann Sunahara, Peter Ward, and Renisa Mawani have documented, British settlers had imposed white

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<sup>67</sup> Quoted from UBC Commerce graduate Akira Namba’s yearbook message to first year Arts student Fusako Ruth Nagata in her 1942 yearbook. Shinko Mary Nagata (Kato): An Interview with a UBC Japanese Canadian Student of 1942,” UBC Japanese Canadian Students of 1942, doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.14288/1.0107967>.

<sup>68</sup> Shinko Mary Nagata (Kato): An Interview with a UBC Japanese Canadian Student of 1942,” UBC Japanese Canadian Students of 1942, doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.14288/1.0107967>.



supremacist legal, economic, and spatial governance since they arrived in the unceded territory that became British Columbia.<sup>69</sup>

Historian Timothy J. Stanley explains that racial exclusions in public schools were an essential part of white supremacist state organization in B.C., reserving civic rights and economic opportunities to citizens coded as ‘white.’<sup>70</sup> Certain vocations were legally closed to Japanese Canadians due to their disenfranchisement under the Provincial Voters Act in 1895. The Law Society of British Columbia and Pharmaceutical Council both required that their respective members be registered on the voters’ list, effectively excluding Nikkei British subjects from either profession.<sup>71</sup>

In his M.A. thesis, published in 1935, University of British Columbia student Rigenda Sumida observed that, “Not as apparent as [...] legal discriminations, but nevertheless, very much in evidence, are the ‘de facto’ discriminations which exclude the Second Generation Japanese from the majority of occupations of any generally accepted standing in the province.”<sup>72</sup> Though Japanese Canadians were not officially prevented from training as chartered accountants, engineers, architects, and teachers, white employers refused to hire them for these positions. Hajime Kagetsu, who managed to earn his Forestry Engineering degree before being exiled from

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<sup>69</sup> See Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was*; Patricia Roy, *A White Man’s Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1989); Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism*; Peter W. Ward, *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy toward Orientals in British Columbia* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1978); Renisa Mawani, *Colonial Proximities: Crossracial Encounters and Juridical Truths in British Columbia, 1871-1921* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009).

<sup>70</sup> Timothy J. Stanley, *Contesting White Supremacy: School Segregation, Anti-Racism, and the Making of Chinese Canadians* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 96-97.

<sup>71</sup> Bernard, “A University at War,” 37; Rigenda Sumida, “The Japanese in British Columbia,” M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1935, 570-71.

<sup>72</sup> Sumida, “The Japanese,” 570.

the coast, “was refused by the Professional Engineers’ Society because he was of Japanese descent.”<sup>73</sup> The first Nisei (second generation Japanese Canadian) to study at UBC, Chitose Uchida, graduated in 1916 and was forced to find her first teaching post in Alberta due to discrimination in her native Vancouver.<sup>74</sup>

## Undaunted Ambitions

Racist employers thwarted many careers: Sumida reported that of the thirty-two Japanese Canadian graduates from UBC as of 1935, only seven were then employed in Canada.<sup>75</sup> Yet many Nisei maintained their aspirations. A survey taken that year by the Canadian Japanese Association found that “almost one-third [of Nisei] wanted professional or highly skilled occupations. Boys wished to be engineers, machinists, and entrepreneurs, while a large number of girls wanted to be nurses, musicians, stenographers, and teachers.”<sup>76</sup>

Some Canadian Issei (first generation) parents and mentors of UBC students feared they would find disappointment at the end of their studies; former Agriculture student Teiso Edward Uyeno recalls his mother warning him that, “even if you get a degree you’ll be working as a labourer, you’ll be working in a sawmill. I said that’s okay [...] I’m going to university to learn how to think, that was my aim.” Warnings about professional dead ends equally failed to deter former Arts and Commerce student Roy Oshiro. Though he was told by the principal of Britannia High School that he would not be hired as a teacher in British Columbia, “I was gung

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<sup>73</sup> *A Degree of Justice*, 41.

<sup>74</sup> Sumida, “The Japanese,” 578; Sumida, “The Japanese,” 579; Jorgden Dahlie, ““The Japanese in B.C.: Lost Opportunity? Some Aspects of the Education of Minorities,” *BC Studies* 8 (Winter 1970-71): 5.

<sup>75</sup> Sumida, “The Japanese,” 593.

<sup>76</sup> Dahlie, “The Japanese in B.C.,” 10.

ho for teaching... it didn't dawn upon me that [I might not attain a position].”<sup>77</sup> Former Arts student Hiroshi Charles Kadota “had ambitions to become a lawyer despite the fact that Japanese Canadians were unable to vote until 1948 and therefore could not practice law.”<sup>78</sup> Former student George Ohama also dreamed of a law career but chose Agriculture because that faculty was more open to Japanese Canadians.<sup>79</sup> Former Commerce student George Yamashita recalls that, “Because of the number of professions that were closed [...] the only thing that was open was commerce.”<sup>80</sup>

Some students saw possibilities outside of their home province after graduation. Former Commerce student Teruo Ted Harada remembers planning to move to Ontario after he acquired his degree because, “I didn’t think you had a chance in British Columbia, it was too racist [...] a lot of people graduated and they were working in lumber mills and logging companies.” By the late 1930s, reports came from Japanese Canadian students and graduates from the University of Saskatoon, University of Alberta, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and McGill University, encouraging the B.C. Nisei to pursue their aspirations in cities with fewer explicit professional

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<sup>77</sup> Teiso Edward Uyeno, 2012, “Teiso Edward Uyeno: An Interview with a UBC Japanese Canadian Student of 1942,” UBC Japanese Canadian Students of 1942, doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.14288/1.0107955>; Roy Oshiro, 2012, “Roy Oshiro: An Interview with a UBC Japanese Canadian Student of 1942,” UBC Japanese Canadian Students of 1942, doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.14288/1.0107969>.

<sup>78</sup> *A Degree of Justice*, 37.

<sup>79</sup> *A Degree of Justice*, 104.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with George Yamashita, conducted by Kathleen Merken and Kathleen Hayami, 27 July 1987, MG 4247, Container 33, Box 25, File 87, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal, MUA.

barriers.<sup>81</sup> For Canadian Nisei university applicants, UBC nonetheless remained the most popular and affordable destination.

While some parents worried that barriers to employment would spoil the benefits of a university degree, others valued education as the best means of ameliorating their children's prospects. Former Commerce student Akira Namba recalls "my parents were very anxious to educate their children." Former Arts student Geri T. Nikaido (Shiozaki) remembers that "I was expected to go [to university]" as her two older brothers had gone before her. Former Social Work student Kiyoshi Shimizu won a scholarship to cover her first year at university in the fall of 1938; her mother expressed great pride at her accomplishment. Shinko Mary Nagata (Kato) recalls, "My mother and father were so proud because they were able to afford to send me, the first of the Nagatas, to go to a university here in Canada."<sup>82</sup>

## Life on Campus

By the mid-thirties, Nikkei attendance nearly matched the provincial average.<sup>83</sup> Nisei youth arrived on campus with a sense of anticipation and pride. Former Commerce student

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<sup>81</sup> George Tamaki, "An Experiment in New Canadianism," *New Canadian*, 22 December 1939; "Social Assimilation A Reality," *New Canadian*, 12 January 1940; "Nisei Student Lord Byng High Valedictorian," *New Canadian*, 1 July 1940; "Town Topics," *New Canadian*, 22 August 1941.

<sup>82</sup> Akira Namba, 2012, "Akira Namba: An Interview with a UBC Japanese Canadian Student of 1942," UBC Japanese Canadian Students of 1942, doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.14288/1.0107962>; F. Richard (Dick) Shiozaki, and Nikaido (Geri) T. Shiozaki, 2012, "F. Richard (Dick) Shiozaki and Nikaido (Geri) T. Shiozaki: An Interview with a UBC Japanese Canadian Student of 1942," UBC Japanese Canadian Students of 1942, doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.14288/1.0107966>; Kiyoshi Shimizu, 2012, "Kiyoshi Shimizu: An Interview with a UBC Japanese Canadian Student of 1942," UBC Japanese Canadian Students of 1942, doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.14288/1.0107954>; Shinko Mary Nagata (Kato), 2012.

<sup>83</sup> Sumida, "The Japanese," 521. He notes that while 0.99 percent of the general population attended UBC, the figure was 0.8 for Japanese Canadians.

Frederick Yoshihide Sasaki remembers eagerly inquiring about soccer tryouts on his first day of school in the fall of 1938; he went on to become the first Japanese Canadian varsity team captain. Nagata recalls ecstatically telling her friends at the Canadian Red Cross about her admission to university. She remembers her first day of school in 1940, “It was wonderful [...] I could hardly wait.”<sup>84</sup>

The Japanese Students Club, founded in 1931, organized lectures and social events, debates with their counterparts at the University of Washington, oratorical contests for Japanese Canadian high school students in Vancouver, and an annual graduates’ banquet. The club engaged with the broader campus community to advocate for Nikkei enfranchisement. In 1934, Arts student Fuji Tanaka raised the issue at a student council meeting and on campus radio. In 1935, the Japanese Students Club brought the topic of voting rights to the noon-hour debates of the parliamentary forum.<sup>85</sup> Shinko Mary Nagata describes the club’s significance, “Vancouver really was not a quiet, non-racial city in those days and to have a Japanese Students Club at the University of British Columbia, was [...] magnificent [...] It was good for us to have a Nisei Students Club where we could discuss problems.”<sup>86</sup>

Individual professors and staff members displayed a varied range of attitudes toward Nisei students. Shimizu worked in the university library under the encouraging guidance of Anne

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<sup>84</sup> Frederick Yoshihide Sasaki, 2012, “Frederick Sasaki Yoshihide: An Interview with a UBC Japanese Canadian Student of 1942,” UBC Japanese Canadian Students of 1942, doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.14288/1.0107959>; Shinko Mary Nagata (Kato), “An Interview,” 2012.

<sup>85</sup> “Team Captains to Supervise Team Morals,” *Ubysey*, 26 January 1934; “Nippon Pleads Justice,” *Ubysey*, 2 February 1934; “Canadian Japanese Want Their Rights,” *Ubysey*, 16 November 1934; “Parliamentary Forum,” *Ubysey*, 29 October 1935; “Oriental Vote Debate Topic,” *Ubysey*, 5 November 1935.

<sup>86</sup> Kagetsu, *The Tree Trunk Can Be My Pillow*, 85; Shinko Mary Nagata (Kato), “An Interview,” 2012.

Smith, who inquired about scholarships for her at several library schools.<sup>87</sup> Economics professor Henry Angus had long supported Nisei students' ambitions. The head of the newly established Commerce department, Ellis Morrow, would distinguish himself for corresponding with his exiled former students and encouraging his academic and business contacts in eastern cities to assist them. Former Commerce student George Yamashita comments, "[Professor Morrow] will always have a special place in our hearts, for the guidance and wisdom he imparted to us during the difficult days of 1942."<sup>88</sup> Some other professors' racism undermined their professionalism.

Former Mechanical Engineering student Saburo Takahashi remembers,

Dean Finlayson of Applied Science wasn't particularly friendly towards us Nisei. Among my professors, only one was antagonistic towards me, a Prof. Richmond. He arranged for a field trip to see the Fraser Mills [...] He got one of the biggest boys in the class to tell me to forget it. I also remember the first time I turned up to apply for a summer job and was told not to bother.<sup>89</sup>

University donors did not always welcome the Nisei with open arms. In May 1941, Alice Michiyo Uyede received the Vancouver Women's Canadian Club Scholarship, given through UBC, after achieving the third highest standing in her nursing exams. In response, the Women's Canadian Club of Vancouver sent a letter to the university senate "requesting a change in the Calendar statement of the Vancouver Women's Canadian Club Scholarship in Nursing and Health to prevent the recurrence of its award being made to a Japanese student."<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Shimizu, "An Interview," 2012. Shimizu recalls that two unnamed library schools told Smith they did not admit 'Oriental' applicants.

<sup>88</sup> Yuko Shibata and Ulrike Hilborn, "'E.H. Morrow and the Boys,'" *Viewpoints* 3, no. 1 (Winter 1982-1983): 4-9.

<sup>89</sup> Letter, Saburo Takahashi to Tadashi Kagetsu, 22 May 2000, Box 10, Folder Vol 44, Docs UBC, Tadashi Jack & Kanaye Kay Kagetsu Fonds, Nikkei National Museum, Burnaby B.C.

<sup>90</sup> "Wins Scholarship," *Vancouver Sun*, 14 May 1941; [Unknown], "Meeting Minutes of the Senate of The University of British Columbia," 840, Senate Minutes, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Senate), 29 August 1941, doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.14288/1.0115659>.

UBC's student newspaper, the *Ubyyssey*, acknowledged anti-Japanese racism on campus, albeit in tepid fashion. In January 1934, Nobuo Sekiguchi wrote in a letter to the editor, "We are without a country - spiritually and morally severed from Japan, and legally and socially ostracized from Canada [...] We are made to feel as if we are encroaching on unrightful ground." An accompanying editorial titled 'Race and Rancour' reported that, "Japanese students on the campus are expressing with some justification, their resentment of the attitude adopted towards Orientals by the citizens of this province." The author minimized the problem, asserting, "surely it is not as bad as some of our correspondents suggest," and cautioning that, "our Japanese friends must not expect too much."<sup>91</sup>

In 1938, a group of entrepreneurial Nisei, including UBC graduates Peter Higashi and Thomas Kunito Shoyama, established the *New Canadian*, the first English-language Nikkei publication in Canada. Frequent articles about post-secondary education in the *New Canadian* illustrate its significance for Japanese Canadians. One 1939 editorial proclaimed, "Nisei University men of today, whatever their other characteristics may be, are pioneers of an oppressed minority group. It is to them that the community invariably looks for making new adventures in untried fields of endeavour."<sup>92</sup> An editorial in a special 1940 issue edited by the UBC Japanese Students Club lamented that few graduates had found gainful employment in British Columbia. "Nevertheless," the author wrote, "nourishing the faith that a time will come when equality in educational opportunities will be his reward, [the Nisei student] strives

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<sup>91</sup> Nobuo Sekiguchi, "Letter to the Editor," *Ubyyssey*, 26 January 1934; "Race and Rancour," *Ubyyssey*, 26 January 1934.

<sup>92</sup> "Nisei Students and Varsity Life: Higher Education Stepping Stone in Career," *New Canadian*, 15 September 1939.

doggedly towards that end, he refuses to assume the fatalistic attitude that he will be restricted to a narrow field of vocational opportunities.”<sup>93</sup>

At the *New Canadian*, examples south of the border fostered hope; Japanese Americans were seen as having progressed “almost a decade in advance.” In September 1941, an optimistic article argued that, “almost all the social problems that we find arising today have been largely worked out in the American scene [...] Many instances of how capable Nisei have solved their vocational problems by obtaining good positions in the American community have also been recorded.”<sup>94</sup>

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, Nisei students at UBC received positive coverage in the local press. In 1937, the *Vancouver Sun* reported that “sixty Japanese and thirty Chinese students at the University of British Columbia are not going to let the war in the Orient interfere with their campus friendships.”<sup>95</sup> Supporters of the broader Japanese Canadian community often used the example of Nisei UBC students as evidence that Japanese Canadians were not a security threat. In February 1941, *Sun* reporter Alan Morley wrote that,

Whenever a civic or provincial political howitzer (a big gun with a large bore) arises in his place among the current Fathers of Democracy and pops off a salvo at the local ‘Japanese menace,’ I remember a certain night when I sat at the University of B.C. bus station shortly after the library closed, and listened to the chatter of a group of Japanese students [...] anyone who knows these Nisei youngsters knows that -amazingly, when one considers the treatment we have given them - they are loyal to their Dominion.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> “A Higher Education for Nisei - Hopeless?” *New Canadian*, 5 January 1940.

<sup>94</sup> “The American Nisei,” *New Canadian*, 26 September 1941.

<sup>95</sup> “Chinese and Japanese Students Continue in Friendly Relations,” *Vancouver Sun*, 20 December 1937; “Klinck Urges ‘Equal Rights’ For Chinese,” *Vancouver Sun*, 5 February 1941.

<sup>96</sup> Alan Morley, “Civis Britannicus Sum...” *Vancouver Sun*, 22 February 1941.



The inclusion of Japanese Canadians in the university's Canadian Officer Training Corps (COTC) encouraged their sense of belonging on campus. As Elaine Bernard documents, Nisei students at UBC were the only visible group of Japanese Canadians to participate in cadet training. After the passing of the National Resources Mobilization Act in 1940, eligible Japanese Canadian men were ordered to report for physical exams but ultimately turned away when they attempted to volunteer in Vancouver and Victoria.<sup>97</sup>

During the 1940-41 school year, all capable male students, including the Nisei, were required to participate in six hours per week of training for the COTC. In January 1941, the federal government officially announced that Japanese Canadians would not be eligible for military service.<sup>98</sup> After the announcement, UBC President Leonard S. Klinck defended the university senate's decision to continue training the Nisei, asserting that, "there is no colour prejudice on the campus. Japanese students who are physically fit are required to present themselves for military parades and lectures." Klinck emphasized that, "the Senate is not likely to make any change unless requested by the government to do so, and I do not believe that such a request will be made." He later told the *Sun* that Japanese Canadian students "are anxious to demonstrate their readiness to do everything possible to be good citizens."<sup>99</sup> The Nisei attended training every Saturday until the end of the Fall 1941 term without incident. Former Science

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<sup>97</sup> Roy Ito notes that Japanese Canadians were able to enlist east of the Rockies prior to 7 December, 1941; a handful of men managed to enlist by regular means between 7 December 1941 and 1945. Ito, *We Went to War*, 153, 302; Bernard, "A University at War," 39.

<sup>98</sup> Bernard, "A University at War," 39. In September 1940, B.C. Premier T.D. Pattullo had urged the Prime Minister not to call up Chinese Canadians or Japanese Canadians for military service lest they demand the franchise. Ito, *We Went to War*, 111.

<sup>99</sup> "Japanese Continue Training," *Ubysey*, 14 January 1941; "All Races Drill in Varsity Corps," *Province*, 15 January 1941.

student Mits Sumiya recalls, “in the officers’ training corps, we were comrades in arms and I personally felt no prejudice.”<sup>100</sup>

## **Disruption**

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 occurred just before the university’s Christmas break. Nikaido recalls learning of the bombing, “my brother Frank and I were sitting on the kitchen floor, listening to the radio and wondering what was going to happen next, because we had no clue what was coming, how would it affect us?” Students still living at home with their families were surprised by visits from men in uniform. Sasaki watched as officers searched the family home and detained his father, who was sent to a prisoner-of-war camp in Angler, Ontario, where he spent the remainder of the war surrounded by German soldiers. Shinko Mary Nagata and her younger sister Fusako Ruth Nagata, also an Arts student at UBC, witnessed the detention of their father with confused terror. Shinko Mary remembers,

When two RCMP officers came to my door and asked for my father they wanted to speak to him [...] I wanted to know why. What were the reasons for him to go, where was he going, when was he coming back? Why couldn’t they ask the questions there? The answer’s nothing [...]. When I saw my father taken away between two police officers. To take a man who was respectable. I love my father so much, honest hard-working and knew the Canadian ways and then here is a man being whisked away without any questions. I was afraid. I was supposed to be respectful. I was supposed to understand this is the Canadian way where you’re allowed to be questioned and then at that moment I could see my mother crying, wondering and then my stomach was so upside down I was anxious, frightened, I couldn’t say I was angry. There was no room for me to be angry, I didn’t have time to be angry [...] after that I did not go to UBC. I had a job to do. I had to find my father so university for me ended.

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<sup>100</sup> Mits Sumiya, 2012, “Mits Sumiya: An Interview with a UBC Japanese Canadian Student of 1942,” UBC Japanese Canadian Students of 1942, doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.14288/1.0107961>.

She left school to help her mother cope with her father's detention and the family's forced departure from their Vancouver home.<sup>101</sup>

## **Sudden Departures**

Nisei students who had been born in Japan but raised in Canada, including Sasaki and former Arts student Nori Nishio, were instructed to move out of the coastal zone immediately.<sup>102</sup> Nishio recalls, "I was one of the first ones to have to leave because having been born in Japan, I was considered an enemy alien. So I had to leave with 24 hours notice and there was a huge hurry to pack and leave the hundred mile safety zone, I had a frantic chat with my mum and dad one night, and the next day I was off with a suitcase, off to Calgary because family friends lived there." Nishio managed to relocate to Edmonton, write his final exams at the University of Alberta that spring, and enroll in dentistry.<sup>103</sup> Sasaki moved to Calgary in the first week of January; "I told my professors I had to get out because I'm an enemy alien." Professor Morrow arranged for Sasaki's instructors to send his course materials to Calgary, where he studied each day at the public library and wrote his exams at the University of Calgary. On 19 May, Professor Morrow wrote to congratulate Sasaki on his first class degree, commenting, "It was too bad that you weren't here to be capped with the rest of them." In his reply, Sasaki described his joy and

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<sup>101</sup> F. Richard (Dick) Shiozaki, and Nikaido (Geri) T. Shiozaki, "An Interview," 2012; Sasaki, "An Interview," 2012; Shinko Mary Nagata (Kato), "An Interview," 2012.

<sup>102</sup> Frederick Yoshihide Sasaki, "An Interview," 2012.

<sup>103</sup> Nori Nishio, 2012, "Nori Nishio: An Interview with a UBC Japanese Canadian Student of 1942," UBC Japanese Canadian Students of 1942, doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.14288/1.0107968>.

relief at acquiring his degree, admitting that, “when I left Vancouver, I felt that I would give anything if I could just graduate.”<sup>104</sup>

While Sasaki and Nishio arrived safely in Alberta, the third Nisei student born in Japan but raised in Canada, Saburo Takahashi, did not succeed in his attempt to follow them. Takahashi began the journey from Vancouver to Edmonton by car, hoping to write his final exams at the University of Alberta alongside Nori Nishio. Prohibited from driving in the restricted zone, he was driven by white friend to Boston Bar, in the Fraser Canyon, before continuing alone. A classmate had arranged for Takahashi to stay with his parents in Trail, providing a map and written directions to their home. In Trail, RCMP officers stopped him, seized the maps, and arrested him for potential sabotage. Soon cleared of all charges, Takahashi was taken to Hastings Park where other Japanese Canadians were being housed in animal pens prior to their forced relocation outside of the restricted zone.<sup>105</sup> The *Ubyyssey* praised the RCMP in their summary of the incident but also commented, “it is most unfortunate that reports which were blown up to fan the flame of increasing public prejudice were released to the newspapers before adequate investigation was made into the case.”<sup>106</sup> Takahashi would have to wait to complete his studies at the University of Toronto. He was turned away several times before gaining admission, and finally graduated in 1945.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Letter, E.H. Morrow to Fred Sasaki, 19 May 1942; Letter, Fred Sasaki to E.H. Morrow, 25 June 1942, Box 1, File 1-3, Japanese Canadian Commerce Students Collection/*Viewpoints Magazine*, UBC Archives, Vancouver B.C.

<sup>105</sup> “Japanese Student Freed; No Grounds,” *Ubyyssey*, 27 March 1942; “Japanese Student Reported Cleared,” *Edmonton Journal*, 28 March 1942, 26; “Jap Student Released,” *Gazette*, 28 March 1942, 22.

<sup>106</sup> “Jap Jitters,” *Ubyyssey*, 27 March 1942.

<sup>107</sup> *A Degree of Justice*, 151-152.

## Cadets Abandoned

As Nisei students and their families reacted to the cascade of draconian government measures targeting Japanese Canadians, the university turned its attention to the cadets, who hoped their training would continue. The *Sun* had reported on 8 December that, “spokesmen for [the Nisei COTC members] re-affirmed their loyalty Sunday, and no change in their status was expected.”<sup>108</sup> The UBC Senate’s Military Education Committee met on 2 January 1942, and moved to release the 49 Nisei members of the COTC from service as of 5 January, despite having received no instruction from federal authorities to do so.<sup>109</sup>

For Sumiya, “the first big shock that we got was about January the 7th, which was when we got back to school to start running normally, we were told that we had been stricken off [...] the roster and that we were ordered to turn in the uniform.” Uyeno remembers, “they called us one by one and told us that you’re honorably discharged because we’re at war with Japan.” Former Arts student Roy Shinobu describes his reaction: “That was to us, we felt unfair, at least I felt unfair... because there was nothing to suggest that we were going to be harmful.”<sup>110</sup> A photo of Sumiya returning his uniform to the orderly room graced the front cover of the *Vancouver News Herald*, and then the *Ubyyssey*. “For a year and a half they have drilled with their friends of the white race,” the student paper’s accompanying text read, “Now it has ended.”<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> “Canadian-born Japanese Here, Remain Loyal,” *Vancouver Sun*, 8 December 1941.

<sup>109</sup> Bernard, “A University at War,” 39.

<sup>110</sup> Sumiya, “An Interview,” 2012; Uyeno, “An Interview,” 2012; Roy Shinobu, 2012, “Roy Shinobu: An Interview with a UBC Japanese Canadian Student of 1942,” UBC Japanese Canadian Students of 1942, doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.14288/1.0107956>.

<sup>111</sup> “Japs Hand in Uniforms At University,” *Vancouver Sun*, 6 January 1942; “Uniform Goes Back,” *Ubyyssey*, 9 January 1942.

President Klinck characterized the measure as protective of the Nisei, arguing that, “it’s for their own protection as well as ours. Feeling runs high down in the business sections and Japanese in uniform would be an unfortunate sight.”<sup>112</sup> The COTC commandant, Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon M. Shrum, commented that, “action has been taken and now criticism cannot be levelled at the university.”<sup>113</sup> Bernard concludes that, “the decision to release these students from training, like the previous decision to include Japanese Canadian students in their training program, was made entirely by the university [...] The university was responding to the pressures of popular feeling they felt to be imminent.”<sup>114</sup>

Japanese Students’ Club president Hajime Kagetsu and fellow cadet Peter Yamada met privately with President Klinck and Lt.-Col. Shrum to protest their dismissal, to no avail.<sup>115</sup> Kagetsu penned a diplomatic letter to the editor in the *Ubysey*, reminding fellow students that, “we have avowed unflinching allegiance to Canada and have continued to respond most enthusiastically to every mentionable patriotic campaign. Had it not been for restrictions scores would now be in our armed forces to join the few who have already been admitted. Our endeavor is to fulfil our obligation and gratitude to Canada.” Bernard notes that while the *Ubysey* staff was initially divided regarding the dismissal of the Nisei cadets, faculty and students failed to mount any significant opposition to the decision.<sup>116</sup>

While Kagetsu was careful not to condemn the university, staff at the *New Canadian* summarized their disappointment more pointedly. The Nisei newspaper had proudly followed the

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<sup>112</sup> Bernard, “A University at War,” 39.

<sup>113</sup> Bernard, “A University at War,” 40.

<sup>114</sup> Bernard, “A University at War,” 40.

<sup>115</sup> Kagetsu, *The Tree Trunk Can Be My Pillow*, 161.

<sup>116</sup> Hajime Kagetsu, “Letter to the Editor,” *Ubysey*, 9 January 1942; Bernard, “A University at War,” 43-45.

khaki-clad Nisei, reporting on their military exams and participation in church parades and a training camp in Nanaimo.<sup>117</sup> On 7 January, the editor expressed feelings of betrayal at UBC's decision, declaring that, "for the first time since becoming part of the University, the editor of this paper is ashamed of the institution which once commanded all his honour and respect."<sup>118</sup> The condemnation prompted outrage at the *Sun*, where editors complained that "Our Japanese Tell Us Where to 'Get Off!'" and assured readers that the *New Canadian* would be reported to the federal Committee on Orientals in British Columbia for its defiant tone.<sup>119</sup>

### **A Cascade of Restrictions**

On 24 February 1942, Order-in-Council PC 1486 empowered the Minister of Justice to regulate the movements of all Japanese Canadians within a hundred-mile wide restricted zone along the Pacific Coast. Two days later, the Minister ordered the expulsion of all "persons of Japanese Racial Origin" from the area, imposed a dusk to dawn curfew, and seized their cars, cameras, and radios.<sup>120</sup> The confiscation of motor vehicles impacted students who had previously carpooled, including Kagetsu, who had driven to campus since the fall of 1937 in a new coupe with a rumble seat.<sup>121</sup> Former Commerce student, Tomi-taro Nishio remembers driving his family's car to the lot at Hastings Park to turn it in to authorities, "you had a car for quite a few

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<sup>117</sup> "Many Cadets Tackle First Military Exam," *New Canadian*, 18 December 1940; "Niseis Parade with Officers' Training Corps," *New Canadian*, 21 February 1941; "Nisei Enjoy Military Camp Training," *New Canadian*, 5 June 1941.

<sup>118</sup> "Editorial," *New Canadian*, 7 January 1942.

<sup>119</sup> "Jap Paper Bitter Over COTC Expulsion," *Vancouver Sun*, 9 January 1942; "Our Japanese Tell Us Where to 'Get Off!'" *Vancouver Sun*, 10 January 1942; "Vancouver Japanese Newspaper to Be Reported to Committee," *Vancouver Sun*, 10 January 1942.

<sup>120</sup> Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism*, 38.

<sup>121</sup> Bernard, "University at War," 46; Kagetsu, *The Tree Trunk Can Be My Pillow*, 86.

years in the family and to have it taken away just like that. What country are we living in, you know?”<sup>122</sup>

Curfew restrictions made life difficult for Nisei students commuting to the Point Grey campus. Harada remembers “we had to be in by nightfall, it was kind of hard because we couldn’t go to the library, I’m staying at rooming house I’ve got no books no reference [materials] I used to go to the library quite often. Sometimes I was late, it was dark when I got home, fortunately I never got caught.” Rugby player Tomi-taro Nishio attended an away-game in Victoria, where he missed a celebratory dinner with his teammates at the Empress Hotel so he could return to the boat before sundown. Though one white teammate refused to speak to Nishio after the attack on Pearl Harbor, others helped him navigate around the curfew so he could attend late practices. Nishio hid in the back of fellow rugby player Bill Orr’s car on rides home from UBC.<sup>123</sup>

The Japanese Students Club had worked to maintain a sense of normalcy, taking club photos for the yearbook, contributing the proceeds of their Valentine’s Day dance to the War Aid Fund, and participating in an International Tea.<sup>124</sup> In February, the club had helped raise funds for the Geneva-based International Student Service (ISS), an organization dedicated to helping refugee students; by March, the ISS was offering to assist Japanese Canadian students cope with their own impending departure from their alma mater. ISS Committee president Ted Scott wrote to Austin Taylor at the British Columbia Security Commission, the organization newly

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<sup>122</sup> Tomi-taro Nishio, 2012, “Tomi-Taro Nishio: An Interview with a UBC Japanese Canadian Student of 1942,” UBC Japanese Canadian Students of 1942, doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.14288/1.0107964>.

<sup>123</sup> Harada, “An Interview,” 2012; Tomi-taro Nishio, “An Interview,” 2012.

<sup>124</sup> “Dates Set for Totem Pictures,” *Ubysey*, 23 January 1942; Kagetsu, *The Tree Trunk Can Be My Pillow*, 163; “Tea Features Race Groups In Costumes,” *Ubysey*, 17 February 1942.



established to organize the exile of Japanese Canadians from the coast, urging him to allow Nisei students to complete their exams. Scott explained that, “assurance that [students] might reasonably expect to remain for their examinations would do much to quiet their present fears and uncertainties and allow them to proceed with these last important weeks of work with much greater effectiveness.”<sup>125</sup>

Most Canadian-born Nisei managed to finish the term. Former Commerce student George Yamashita describes his last months at UBC:

The evacuation from the West Coast was a time of confusion, anxiety, mental agony, particularly for our parents’ generation, who were seeing a lifetime of struggles disappear overnight. For myself, it was an immense disappointment with feelings of sadness that the educational system which had stressed and instilled good citizenship had gone for nought. It was an anxious and troublesome period, because of the uncertainty facing the graduating Japanese students, not knowing when they and their family would be selected to evacuate the city, whether they would be permitted to write their final exams. To cope with the preparations for their final exams, plus the family anxieties, were a double burden which affected our concentration to a degree.<sup>126</sup>

On 30 March, first year Arts student Yuriko Shimotakahara wrote in her diary, “Things are working fast now. Rumours, absurd and real, are floating around... We might not be able to write final exams now.”<sup>127</sup> Namba remembers, “I just kept going to university every day because things were happening [...] very fast, but as far as I was concerned I was involved in my academic work, I wasn’t too distracted [...] I just could not afford to fail a grade [...] I had too great obligations for the people who were helping me to go to school.”<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> “I.S.S. Week Raises \$320 For Prisoners,” *Ubysey*, 27 February 1942; “I.S.S. Aids in Jap Evacuation,” *Ubysey*, 13 March 1942.

<sup>126</sup> Letter, George Yamashita to Ulrike Hilborn, 30 January 1983, Box 1, File 1-1, Japanese Canadian Commerce Students Collection/*Viewpoints* Magazine, UBC Archives, Vancouver B.C.

<sup>127</sup> *A Degree of Justice*, 132.

<sup>128</sup> Namba, “An Interview,” 2012.

On 29 April, the *New Canadian* reported that, “The gravity of the local situation has curtailed many an activity, but students have been allowed to proceed along their academic paths. Having finished their final examinations, fourteen Nisei graduates of the class of ‘42 will sally forth into a bewildered war-torn world.” The annual Japanese Student Club’s graduate banquet was cancelled as members prepared to leave their homes.<sup>129</sup> The 1942 UBC yearbook, the *Totem*, contained what would be the final entry for the club until Japanese Canadians were permitted to return to the coast in 1949. “New Canadians,” the summary began, “is the humble boast of seventy Japanese students at the University who this year carried on a varied program despite the difficulties of a bewildering and complex international situation.”<sup>130</sup>

### **Uncertain Futures**

The ISS surveyed the registered Nisei students regarding their financial capacities and future plans, and compiled summaries of their academic records with the help of Japanese Students’ Club President Hajime Kagetsu and UBC registrar C.B. Wood.<sup>131</sup> Of the 46 survey respondents, 44 expressed a desire to continue their education. Twelve students could expect financial assistance from their families, while seventeen would only be able to cover tuition and living costs if they could secure adequate employment. First year pre-medicine student Hisatoshi Moriyama offered a typical response: “[he] would like to continue but [is] unable to unless it is possible to obtain summer work to earn the necessary money.” The students depended on work in industries along the B.C. coast. Applied Science student Shuichiro Fred Yano told the ISS that

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<sup>129</sup> “Fourteen Nisei UBC Grads To Take Degree,” *New Canadian*, 29 April 1942.

<sup>130</sup> “The 1942 Totem,” 212, UBC Yearbooks: Vancouver: Students of the University of British Columbia. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.14288/1.0119021>.

<sup>131</sup> “I.S.S. Aids in Jap Evacuation,” *Ubyyssey*, 13 March 1942.

he hoped to earn his tuition fees working in a Haney cannery, “there is a possibility of getting a job there every summer if permission to return can be obtained.”<sup>132</sup>

In addition to financial constraints, many students’ decisions hinged upon the needs of their families: first year Arts student Chiye Alice Kudo and fourth year Mechanical Engineering student Koei Mitsui told the ISS they might travel with their parents to sugar beet farms in Alberta or Manitoba. Sisters Lily Yuriko and Mariko Uyeda both offered to teach in one of the interior towns if their parents were sent there.<sup>133</sup>

Asked where they would like to transfer if possible, the ISS survey respondents named seven other Canadian universities; University of Toronto was the most popular choice, named by fourteen students, followed by Queen’s, named by eight. Five students, James Hasegawa, Hajime Kagetsu, Koei Mitsui, Yoshito Takahashi, and Koichi Tsujimura, listed McGill as an option; Kagetsu reported that he had already applied for admission to McGill.<sup>134</sup>

Upon finishing their final exams, some students were immediately confined with their families in Hastings Park’s stables. Harada recalls, “As soon as I finished school they sent me to Hastings Park.” Reunited with his mother and younger siblings, he remembers, “I was really disgusted and disappointed to see them in such a dirty place even if it was clean, you can’t take the smell away.” As one of the few inmates with a university education, he was assigned to teach

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<sup>132</sup> “Information about the Students of Japanese Racial Origin who were in attendance at the University of British Columbia, 1941-42 term,” nd, Box 10, Folder Vol 44 Docs UBC, Tadashi Jack & Kanaye Kay Kagetsu Fonds, NNM.

<sup>133</sup> “Information about the Students of Japanese Racial Origin,” nd, Box 10, Folder Vol 44 Docs UBC, Tadashi Jack & Kanaye Kay Kagetsu Fonds, NNM. Koei Mitsui would go on to finish his education at the University of Manitoba and University of Toronto, where he earned his degree in Mechanical Engineering. *A Degree of Justice*, 67.

<sup>134</sup> “Information about the Students of Japanese Racial Origin,” nd, Folder Vol 44 Docs UBC, Box 10, Tadashi Jack & Kanaye Kay Kagetsu Fonds, NNM.

grade seven before being sent to build houses in Slocan. “I accomplished nothing while I was there.” Harada was accepted to the University of Manitoba but could not afford to attend. Low wages prevented him from saving enough money for tuition and his dispossessed parents could no longer assist him. The BCSC denied him permission to leave Slocan. He never finished his degree.<sup>135</sup>

Other Nisei students found themselves drafted to work at Hastings Park and the interior towns. Chemical engineering graduate student Shaw Joseph Mizuhara had been working on specialized oil research under Dr. W.F. Seyer; in July he was pulled away to work as an electrician in the interior.<sup>136</sup> Namba taught grade eight in the animal pens before being sent to Slocan. Living in a tent during his first eighteen months there, he worked on an outhouse crew and the BCSC office before being recruited to teach high school for the Anglican church.<sup>137</sup> Arts graduate Kimi Takimoto established a school in Kaslo with the help of other Nisei alumni.<sup>138</sup> Uyeno built houses in New Denver before being hired to teach elementary school in Roseberry and Kaslo.<sup>139</sup> Commerce graduate David Shiozaki sacrificed his plans to begin graduate school at the University of Alberta, choosing to teach at Hastings Park instead.<sup>140</sup> Shimizu’s plan to complete her second field placement at a local tuberculosis hospital was interrupted when she agreed to assist Amy Leigh, senior social worker at the BCSC, who sent her to Kaslo to help

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<sup>135</sup> Harada, “An Interview,” 2012; *A Degree of Justice*, 27.

<sup>136</sup> “Information about the Students of Japanese Racial Origin,” nd, Tadashi Jack & Kanaye Kay Kagetsu Fonds, NNM; *Province*, 13 July 1942.

<sup>137</sup> Namba, “An Interview,” 2012.

<sup>138</sup> Shinobu, “An Interview,” 2012.

<sup>139</sup> Uyeno, “An Interview,” 2012. *A Degree of Justice*, 168. Uyeno would later resume his studies at the University of Toronto, receiving his BA in 1947 and MA in 1952 before continuing on at Stanford University.

<sup>140</sup> Letter, David Shiozaki to E.H. Morrow, 15 July 1942, Box 1, File 1-4, Japanese Canadian Commerce Students Collection/*Viewpoints* Magazine, UBC Archives, Vancouver B.C.

newly displaced Japanese Canadians adjust to life there. Shimizu was permitted to return to the university to complete her final credits during the summer term; she was the last Nisei on campus in 1942.<sup>141</sup>

Some students managed to transfer to other universities with the help of influential mentors. Professor Morrow, in particular, wrote general letters of recommendation for his former students and contacted officials at the University of Alberta, University of Western Ontario, the City of Edmonton, University of Toronto, and the Chartered Accountants Association in Montreal.<sup>142</sup> With Morrow's assistance, Tomi-taro Nishio managed to register at the University of Western Ontario.<sup>143</sup> When the Nagata family moved from Edmonton to Toronto, an Edmontonian Anglican minister referred Shinko Mary Nagata to the University of Toronto bursar. When Nikaido was turned away from the University of Toronto, Dr. George Williams Brown from the University's Victoria College successfully argued that the College could admit her in its own right.<sup>144</sup>

ISS officials sent letters to the University of Alberta appealing for the admission of eight former UBC students. In September 1942, the *Edmonton Journal* reported that six Nisei had been accepted with the approval of the BCSC and special permission from Edmonton City

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<sup>141</sup> Shimizu, "An Interview," 2012.

<sup>142</sup> Letter of recommendation, E.H. Morrow, 4 December 1942, Box 1, File 1-3; Letter, E.H. Morrow to University of Alberta Department of Commerce, 15 June 1942, Box 1, File 1-4; Letter, E.H. Morrow to Ross Willis, 7 March 1944, Box 1, File 1-2; Letter, E.H. Morrow to Frederick Sasaki, 3 May 1944, Box 1, File 1-3; Letter, E.H. Morrow to Chartered Accountants Association, Montreal, 17 March 1944, Box 1, File 1-6, Box 1, Japanese Canadian Commerce Students Collection/*Viewpoints* Magazine, UBC Archives, Vancouver B.C.

<sup>143</sup> Tomi-taro Nishio, "An Interview," 2012.

<sup>144</sup> F. Richard (Dick) Shiozaki, and Nikaido (Geri) T. Shiozaki, "An Interview," 2012.

Council.<sup>145</sup> Six students were registered that fall at the University of Manitoba.<sup>146</sup> Further east, Principal R.C. Wallace disclosed that Japanese Canadian students would be admitted to Queen's with recommendations from UBC and the RCMP.<sup>147</sup>

The Board of Governors at the University of Toronto refused to admit Sasaki as a graduate student; "It was quite a blow to me as I had been planning and saving for two years in order to continue my studies."<sup>148</sup> David Shiozaki was similarly rejected by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Toronto "owing to racial barriers".<sup>149</sup> In December 1942, he explained to Professor Morrow that "most of the undergraduates have been unable to enter other universities this year [...] I am hoping that most of them will be admitted by eastern institutions next fall."<sup>150</sup>

## Dispossession

In addition to interrupting their studies, exile, internment, dispossession, and family separation took a steep toll on UBC's Nisei students. The student's families lost all of their land and most of their possessions. Oshiro's family's company, BC Wood and Coal, "was sold out from under them, and the family struggled to make ends meet."<sup>151</sup> Former student Reverend

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<sup>145</sup> "Discuss Japanese Varsity Students," *Edmonton Journal*, 30 June 1942; "6 Coast Japanese to Attend Varsity," *The Edmonton Journal*, 10 September 1942.

<sup>146</sup> Letter, Alex Grant to E.H. Morrow, 7 December 1942, Box 1, File 1-3, Japanese Canadian Commerce Students Collection/*Viewpoints* Magazine, UBC Archives, Vancouver B.C.

<sup>147</sup> "Queen's Takes Jap Students," *Windsor Star*, 15 September 1942; "Queens' to Admit 'Limited Number' of Japs from B.C.," *Ottawa Citizen*, 15 September 1942.

<sup>148</sup> Yuko Shibata and Ulrike Hilborn, "'E.H. Morrow and the Boys,'" *Viewpoints* 3, no. 1 (Winter 1982-1983): 8.

<sup>149</sup> Letter, David Shiozaki to E.H. Morrow, 17 March 1947, Box 1, File 1-4, Japanese Canadian Commerce Students Collection/*Viewpoints* Magazine, UBC Archives, Vancouver B.C.

<sup>150</sup> Letter, David Shiozaki to E.H. Morrow, 10 December 1942, Box 1, File 1-4, Japanese Canadian Commerce Students Collection/*Viewpoints* Magazine, UBC Archives, Vancouver B.C.

<sup>151</sup> *A Degree of Justice*, 116.

Bishop Kenryu Takashi Tsuji's family lost their 35 acre berry farm.<sup>152</sup> Former Economics student Shigeo Frederick Onizuka's family lost their tailor and press shop at 3rd and Main Street in Vancouver.<sup>153</sup> Former Engineering student Mitsuru Sasaki's family lost their home, their fishing boat, and all of their possessions, including family photographs.<sup>154</sup> Former Commerce student Yutaka "Coby" Kobayashi's family "left behind a number of fishing boats, a packer, [their Richmond] acreage, a house just built in 1937, and a car."<sup>155</sup>

Scholarship winner Alice Uyede found herself in Kaslo in the summer of 1942; her father had been sent to the Black Spur road camp while the rest of the family was sent to a Manitoba sugar beet farm. By summer's end, her father had been diagnosed with leukemia and sent to spend his final days with his family near Winnipeg. Authorities forbade Alice from traveling to see him before he died that September.<sup>156</sup>

After he completed his last semester at UBC, the BCSC pushed Sumiya to work at a road camp. He remembers,

When they told me I had to go to a road camp I said no I'm not going to a road camp. First of all I'm Canadian born, I swore my allegiance to the crown, I see no reason why I have to move from the coast but I am certainly not going to a camp because I consider that as a slave labour camp where you're forced to go, you can't bargain for remuneration because they have a fixed very low [wage], 25 cents or less, and you're guarded by the mounties. I said that's a slave labor camp [...] As soon as I said that, the mounties came picked me up and took me over to the immigration building and turned me over to the military.

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<sup>152</sup> *A Degree of Justice*, 160.

<sup>153</sup> *A Degree of Justice*, 113.

<sup>154</sup> *A Degree of Justice*, 125.

<sup>155</sup> *A Degree of Justice*, 55.

<sup>156</sup> Interview with Tiny Sakamoto (Eguchi) conducted by Sandra Kawaii, 30 August 1988, MG 4247, Container 33, Box 25, File 22, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal Fonds, MUA.

Sumiya was sent to Angler, where he stayed until 4 April 1946. He managed to carry on a correspondence course from the University of Saskatchewan during his first year there. Former Arts and Science student Shigeru Jack Kawaguchi was interned alongside Sumiya at Angler for the duration of the war.<sup>157</sup>

## **The Appeal of Montreal**

Banned from returning to the coast until 1949, many Japanese Canadians were drawn to Montreal. Some former UBC students, like Hiroyoshi Jack Kobayshi, who secured a position in a Montreal radio repair shop in 1943, found employment prospects.<sup>158</sup> UBC commerce graduate Hiroshi Roy Nose worked as a financial analyst before moving on to complete his MBA at Harvard.<sup>159</sup> Former UBC student Yuriko Lily Uyeda was hired as a secretary for the Quebec Religious Education Council before resuming her university career at the University of Toronto.<sup>160</sup>

Some Japanese Canadians, like Kimiaki Nakashima, chose Montreal because Toronto was closed to them.<sup>161</sup> Others may have heard that Montreal mayor Camilien Houde, who had been interned alongside Japanese Canadians for four years in Petawawa for opposing

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<sup>157</sup> Sumiya, "An Interview," 2012; *A Degree of Justice*, 48; *A Degree of Justice*, 145.

<sup>158</sup> *A Degree of Justice*, 52. He would go on to advance in Montreal's RCA Victor electronics company, spearheading numerous significant projects.

<sup>159</sup> *A Degree of Justice*, 99.

<sup>160</sup> *A Degree of Justice*, 163. Uyeda discovered an interest in the Student Christian Movement at UBC. She had a long career with the United Church in Hamilton, Toronto, and Brandon, Manitoba.

<sup>161</sup> Interview with Kimiaki Nakashima, 21 July 1982, MG 4247, Container 32, Box 24, File 37, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal Fonds, MUA. Keibo Oiwa notes that "many of the Nikkei who came to Montreal were those who had been refused settlement in Toronto." Keibo Oiwa, "The Structure of Dispersal: The Japanese-Canadian Community of Montreal 1942-1952," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 18, no. 2 (1986): 22.



conscription, was sympathetic to their situation.<sup>162</sup> Namba remembers “as far as I was aware, Montreal probably was the most cosmopolitan of the large metropolitan centres in its population makeup. So I figured that I would encounter the minimum racism that we’d had a bellyful of in B.C.”<sup>163</sup>

Alongside the displaced Nisei UBC students, growing numbers of Japanese Canadian youth were finishing high school every year; many held post-secondary goals. Some Japanese Canadians chose to resettle in Montreal so they could send their children to McGill University. Fumiko Taguchi, an Issei concerned for her children’s education, remembers making the decision to settle in Montreal after being told about McGill by a trusted friend at bible study, “we came to Montreal and it was McGill University which made us decide.”<sup>164</sup> Prominent merchant Toryaru Shimotakahara, who moved to Montreal with his family of seven in the spring of 1942, told the *Montreal Gazette* that “present plans call for three of the children, who range from 14 to 21 years of age, entering McGill University next term.”<sup>165</sup>

In 1951, the editors of the *Bulletin*, Montreal’s Japanese Canadian community newspaper, reminisced, “Years ago on the West Coast, as we dragged ourselves to school and later went out

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<sup>162</sup> *Ganbari*, 7; Robinson, “Two Other Solitudes,” 147.

<sup>163</sup> Interview with Akira Namba conducted by Melissa Steele, 1987, MG 4247, Container 32, Box 24, File 40, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal Fonds, MUA.

<sup>164</sup> Interview with Fumiko Taguchi conducted by T. Yoshida, translated by Mariko Ikeda, 1 August 1986, MG 4247, Container 33, Box 25, File 44, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal Fonds, MUA. Taguchi’s son, Dr. Yoshinori Taguchi, began his McGill career in 1951, graduating with a B.Sc. in 1955, and his medical degree in 1959.

<sup>165</sup> “Japanese Family Arrives from B.C.,” *Gazette*, 19 May 1942. In Montreal, the Shimotakahara family owned and operated the Clevermaid factory and clothing store.

to work, we knew little about Montreal. We might have thought ‘It’s that inland seaport with a famous university, isn’t it? Or is McGill in Quebec City?’<sup>166</sup>

By the time they began applying to universities east of B.C. in 1942, the Japanese Canadian UBC students described in this chapter had already overcome significant obstacles to pursue their education. These students had believed university degrees would expand their social and professional horizons, and worked hard to make the best of the opportunities available to them. As they scrambled to help their families cope with material dispossession, forced resettlement, and incarceration, many Japanese Canadian students watched their long term educational and professional aspirations evaporate. Those who hoped to salvage their degrees would depend on the goodwill of other Canadian universities.

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<sup>166</sup> “Fourth National J.C.C.A. Conference,” *Bulletin*, vol 6, issue 3 (17 March 1951) 1, Container 19, Box 7, File 10, MG 4247, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal Fonds, MUA.

## Chapter 2: Old McGill

In this chapter, I provide a brief history of McGill University. To understand how McGill's Senate came to completely exclude Japanese Canadian undergraduate students from admission, it is helpful to review the institution's tradition of top-down governance, the influence of its powerful Board of Governors on academic freedom, and its efforts to consolidate Anglo-Protestant supremacy.

Unofficial racial exclusion at McGill did not begin with the Second World War, and would continue after its conclusion. Despite its distance from the west coast, where most Japanese Canadians resided until federal authorities forcibly displaced them in 1942, McGill had admitted Japanese Canadians before and during the war. Accepting Japanese Canadian students who had been forced to leave UBC would not have been unthinkable.

Remembering her alma mater, McGill alumna Betty Kobayashi Issenman writes,

McGill University, in the second half of the thirties, seemed to be as it always had been, respectable, solid, tranquil; a remote island where the sons and daughters of the well-to-do gained their passport to government, business, and the professions. There was even a raccoon coat or two to be seen and the traditional rules were: nobody rocked the boat; Jews were admitted on a quota; fraternities looked after campus politics; Chancellor Sir Edward Beatty was In Charge; and a woman's place was in the home.<sup>167</sup>

In the fall term of 1936, Betty Kobayashi began her studies at McGill as an Arts student. An outspoken member of the campus community, Kobayashi represented McGill at the National Conference of Canadian University Students alongside Madeleine Parent in 1937.<sup>168</sup> She was elected by her fellow students to the Students' Executive Council in 1938, served as the Vice President of the Student Christian Movement, and seconded the motion to form a campus branch

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<sup>167</sup> Betty Kobayashi Issenman, "A Rebel Remembers the Cause," *McGill News*, 18.

<sup>168</sup> "40 McGill Delegates Named to Conference," *Gazette*, 16 December 1937.

of the Red Cross in 1939.<sup>169</sup> Kobayashi graduated in 1940 and went on to complete a Diploma of Social Work in 1942.

The first McGill student of Japanese ancestry, Yasuhara Kato, received his degree in veterinary science in 1899.<sup>170</sup> In 1928, future United States senator Samuel Hayakawa received his graduate degree in English. Hayakawa was active in the McGill Group, a collective of influential authors and critics credited with helping introduce modernism to Canadian literature.<sup>171</sup> In 1936, he would join a delegation to Ottawa to appeal for the franchise for Japanese Canadians.<sup>172</sup>

In 1933, George Yama, a Montreal-born Japanese Canadian, began his Engineering degree, graduating in 1938.<sup>173</sup> Penticton-born Kiyokazu Jack Momose began his undergraduate studies at McGill in the fall of 1940, transferring from Arts to Science the following year.<sup>174</sup> In September 1941, University of British Columbia graduates George Shimotakahara and Satoru Watanabe became the first Japanese Canadians admitted to McGill's Faculty of Medicine.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> "Women of McGill to Aid Red Cross," *Gazette*, 14 October, 1939.

<sup>170</sup> Toyo Takata, *Nikkei Legacy: The Story of Japanese Canadians from Settlement to Today* (Toronto: NC Press Limited, 1983), 108.

<sup>171</sup> Gerald W. Haslam and Janice E. Haslam, *In Thought and Action: The Enigmatic Life of S.I. Hayakawa* (Lincoln: UNP-Bison Original, 2011), 31.

<sup>172</sup> Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was*, 360.

<sup>173</sup> "Old McGill" entry, 1938, George Yama, [http://yearbooks.mcgill.ca/viewbook.php?campus=downtown&book\\_id=1938#page/98/mode/2up](http://yearbooks.mcgill.ca/viewbook.php?campus=downtown&book_id=1938#page/98/mode/2up)

<sup>174</sup> McGill University Calendar, 1940-1941: 1154; McGill University Calendar, 1941-1942: 1152.

<sup>175</sup> McGill University, "Old McGill," 1944, Accessed November 12, 2018. [http://yearbooks.mcgill.ca/viewbook.php?campus=downtown&book\\_id=1944#page/140/mode/2up](http://yearbooks.mcgill.ca/viewbook.php?campus=downtown&book_id=1944#page/140/mode/2up); [http://yearbooks.mcgill.ca/viewbook.php?campus=downtown&book\\_id=1944#page/142/mode/2up](http://yearbooks.mcgill.ca/viewbook.php?campus=downtown&book_id=1944#page/142/mode/2up); A photo of the two students at their first residence in Montreal [http://nikkeimuseum.org/www/item\\_detail.php?art\\_id=A11729](http://nikkeimuseum.org/www/item_detail.php?art_id=A11729)

When the Senate deemed Japanese Canadian students unfit for admission, these three students were active members of the McGill community.

## **History of a National Institution**

McGill University was founded in 1821 with assets bequeathed to the Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning by fur trader, land speculator, and slaveholder James McGill. In *Indigenous McGill*, historian Suzanne Morton reminds us that McGill, “like all public and private property on the island of Montreal - is located on unceded Indigenous territory. [...] at various times, the Island of Montreal was Wendat, Anishnaabeg and Haudenosaunee territory. The Kanien’kehá:ka (Mohawk) are the present-day caretakers of the air, land and waters.”<sup>176</sup>

In its first century, McGill administrators relied on private donations to fund the construction of the Montreal Medical Institute, the Arts Building, Royal Victoria College, Macdonald College, and other new buildings serving its growing number of faculties. McGill bestowed the first medical degree awarded in Canada in 1833, and focused exclusively on medical education before creating the Faculties of Arts and Law, respectively, in 1843 and 1848.

By 1921, Cyrus Macmillan boasted that McGill “has given hundreds of graduates to high positions in the Church, the State, and industrial and educational institutions.”<sup>177</sup> As one of Canada’s premiere educational institutions, McGill contributed to academic standardization and

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<sup>176</sup> She writes, “the current McGill territorial acknowledgement avoids the history and present-day dispossession by highlighting land, not as the loss of a resource but as a place of ‘meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous people, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabeg nations.’” Morton’s booklet is “meant to represent a preliminary contribution, a placeholder while [a more comprehensive study of the historical relationship of McGill University with indigenous communities] awaits action.” Suzanne Morton, *Indigenous McGill*, (Montreal: Self published, 2019), 4.

<sup>177</sup> Cyrus MacMillan, *McGill and its Story 1821-1921* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1921), 15.

inserted itself at the nucleus of national political, industrial, and cultural networks. In the 1850s, McGill followed the example of Oxford University, establishing the standard examinations used in affiliated schools across Canada.<sup>178</sup> The National Research Council, established in 1916 to fund and direct scientific research serving Canada's military and industrial needs, awarded most of its grants to McGill along with the University of Toronto in its first two decades of operation.

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Despite such prestigious grants, and a significant government loan granted during a financial crisis in 1860, McGill operated with inconsistent income.<sup>180</sup> Paul Axelrod writes that, “for McGill’s first 140 years, government funding was miniscule and unreliable. Beginning with the example of James McGill, prominent and frequently wealthy individuals sought to meet the educational needs of their class and community.”<sup>181</sup> The University depended on generous sums from the Molsons, Redpaths, William Macdonald, and Lord Strathcona to fund each new edifice.

Along with its major donors, McGill relied on fundraising campaigns conducted by a Board of Governors stacked with leaders from institutions including the Bank of Montreal, Royal Bank, Canadian Pacific Railway, Montreal Light, Heat and Power Company, Sun Life Assurance, and the St. Lawrence Sugar Refineries. The governors lobbied their peers in the

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<sup>178</sup> Stanley Brice Frost, *McGill University: For the Advancement of Learning, Volume I, 1801-1895* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1980), 198.

<sup>179</sup> Paul Axelrod, “McGill University on the Landscape of Higher Education: Historical Reflections,” *Fontanus* 10 (1998): 22.

<sup>180</sup> Morton, *Indigenous McGill*, 6. In June 1860, the Executive Council of the Province of Canada provided a loan of \$40,000, all of which was taken from the General Indian Trust Fund and Six Nations of Grand River Fund. She notes that while McGill repaid the loan by 1873, the money was never returned to the two accounts from whence it came.

<sup>181</sup> Axelrod, “McGill University,” 21.

business community to contribute to the operation and growth of the University. By the 1942-1943 academic year, corporate donations eclipsed gifts from wealthy individuals.<sup>182</sup>

As McGill expanded its national profile, the University began to focus on serving Canadian military needs. In 1912, McGill created the first chapter of the Canadian Officers' Training Corps to train male students as military officers. Two years later, the First World War offered the opportunity for McGill to augment its reputation on the national stage. McGill staff operated the No. 3 Canadian General Hospital in France; one of its staff members, former McGill instructor Dr. John McCrae, would go on to pen the iconic poem "In Flanders Fields" before succumbing to pneumonia in 1918.<sup>183</sup> Over 3000 McGill students and graduates enlisted in the military and 363 were killed in action. R.C. Fetherstonhaugh writes that, "it is sufficient to say that the [McGill] Governors in the years of the Great War served the Dominion with devotion. No group of men in Canada contributed in greater degree to the victory the Allies won."<sup>184</sup> The legacy of the First World War continued to shape McGill in the years that followed. In 1918, the Carnegie Corporation announced a one million dollar donation to the University in recognition of its role in the war effort.<sup>185</sup> Sir Arthur Currie, a decorated general with no academic experience, was installed as Principal in 1920.

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<sup>182</sup> William Fong, "J.W. McConnell and the Chancellorship of McGill University, 1942-3," *Fontanus* 13 (2013): 82.

<sup>183</sup> Stanley Brice Frost, *McGill University for the Advancement of Learning, Volume II, 1895-1971* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984), 101.

<sup>184</sup> R.C. Fetherstonhaugh, *McGill University at War: 1914-1918, 1939-1945* (Montreal: McGill University, 1947).

<sup>185</sup> Frost, *McGill University, Volume II*, 107.

After the First World War, McGill, along with the University of Toronto, received further significant investment from the Carnegie and Rockefeller Foundations.<sup>186</sup> Unlike its Ontarian rival, McGill could count on little funding from the provincial government until the 1960s; while other English Canadian universities received an average of forty percent of their income from government sources in 1940, this figure was less than ten percent for McGill.<sup>187</sup>

The Depression years brought financial strain to the university; administrators froze and reduced salaries while increasing student fees. In the 1931-32 academic year, McGill operated at a deficit of \$337, 234, the equivalent of 5.7 million dollars in 2019. Similar deficits were incurred over the next decade, with little assistance from the province.<sup>188</sup> Axelrod suggests that McGill's unique dependence on powerful private donors and corporations in difficult times may have made the university "less receptive to minority opinion."<sup>189</sup> McGill's founders had organized the university around the needs of the wealthy; in the precarious years of the Depression those who controlled the pursestrings tightened their grip over the institution.

## **Freedom of Expression**

In the years leading up to the Second World War, students asserted their academic freedom, with mixed results. Axelrod notes that, "the limited autonomy attained by students through their elected councils was counterbalanced by the ultimate authority held by university officials over student affairs."<sup>190</sup> The *McGill Daily* writers published cheeky content within

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<sup>186</sup> Jeffrey D. Brison, *Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Canada: American Philanthropy and the Arts and Letters in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005).

<sup>187</sup> Frost, *McGill University, Volume II*, 86; Paul Axelrod, "McGill University," 21.

<sup>188</sup> Dorothy McMurray, *Four Principals of McGill: A Memoir, 1929-1963* (Montreal: Graduates' Society of McGill University, 1974), 19.

<sup>189</sup> Axelrod, "McGill University," 27.

<sup>190</sup> Axelrod, *Making a Middle Class*, 101.



carefully delineated limits, earning themselves the occasional scolding. The News editor was suspended in 1932 over an “injudicious” article titled “Beer Infuses Students with Carefree Jollity.”<sup>191</sup> The satirical Commerce issue of February 1943 would provoke public outrage for its salacious innuendo, resulting in lengthy suspensions for four students.<sup>192</sup>

Administrators’ responses to left-wing clubs ranged from mild embarrassment to serious apprehension. In 1933, Principal Currie banned the McGill Labour Club’s publication, the *Alarm Clock*, and the RCMP paid close attention to the club’s members.<sup>193</sup> The Student Christian Movement (SCM), a reformist organization promoting the social gospel, received more sympathy from administrators, including the notoriously conservative Chancellor Sir Edward Beatty.<sup>194</sup> Still, Principal Currie noted to a student in 1925 that the SCM “[needed] watching,” and members of the SCM were associated with several scandalous incidents in the 1930s. They welcomed a visit from representatives of the embattled Spanish government in 1936, an event attacked by Université de Montréal students shouting anti-communist slogans, and joined protests against the 1937 Act Respecting Communist Propaganda, popularly known as the “Padlock Law.”<sup>195</sup>

Academic freedom for professors was a delicate subject in the 1930s, as the political activities of a small number of faculty members, notably Eugene Forsey, J. King Gordon, and

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<sup>191</sup> “Daily Editors Resign in Protest,” *McGill Daily*, 7 December 1932.

<sup>192</sup> “Resolution passed at a special meeting of the Senate of McGill University 24 February 1943” in “Senate: Minutes re McGill Daily” (1943), RG 2, Container 81, File 1613, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>193</sup> Axelrod, *Making a Middle Class*, 133.

<sup>194</sup> Axelrod, *Making a Middle Class*, 129. For more on Beatty’s ideological leanings, See Don Nerbas, *The Dominion of Capital: The Politics of Big Business and the Crisis of the Canadian Bourgeoisie, 1914-1947* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

<sup>195</sup> Djwa, *The Politics of the Imagination*, 169, 172; Betty Kobayashi Issenman, *McGill News* (Summer 1981): 18; Djwa, *The Politics of the Imagination*, 86.

Frank Scott, incensed the Board of Governors and members of the business community, including Herbert Molson, A.J. Nesbitt, A.B. Purvis, J.W. McConnell, and Chancellor Beatty.<sup>196</sup> Currie was reluctant to fire staff members over their political views, for fear of being accused of stifling free speech.<sup>197</sup> He defended academic freedom in internal memos while discouraging Professor Scott from associating himself with the university in letters to newspapers or articles on controversial subjects.<sup>198</sup> His successor, Principal Arthur Morgan, proved to be too liberal in matters of free expression. His failure to silence liberal and radical faculty members contributed to his alienation from the Board of Governors and abrupt resignation after just two years as Principal.<sup>199</sup>

Even Leonard Marsh's Rockefeller Foundation-funded Social Science Research Series provoked alarm from the Board of Governors for its focus on poverty and interventionist recommendations. He was let go by Principal Douglas when his grant ran out in 1940. Ironically, Marsh's research at McGill would form the basis of his *Report on Social Security for Canada*, a key document in the development of the Canadian welfare state.<sup>200</sup> Scott managed to hold onto his position, though he was prevented from becoming the Dean of Law until 1961; King Gordon lost his post at the United Theological College, and Forsey's contract was not renewed in 1943. All three men were surveilled by the RCMP during their McGill careers.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Michiel Horn, *Academic Freedom in Canada: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1999), 129; Axelrod, *McGill University*, 27; Djwa, *The Politics of the Imagination*, 238.

<sup>197</sup> Horn, *Academic Freedom*, 131.

<sup>198</sup> Djwa, *The Politics of the Imagination*, 130, 133.

<sup>199</sup> Marlene Shore, *The Science of Social Redemption: McGill, the Chicago School, and the Origins of Social Research in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 265; Nerbas, *Dominion of Capital*, 149.

<sup>200</sup> Axelrod, *Making a Middle Class*, 63; Horn, *Academic Freedom*, 141; Shore, *The Science of Social Redemption*, xviii.

<sup>201</sup> Djwa, *The Politics of the Imagination*, 135, 359, 133; Horn, *Academic Freedom*, 143.

## Institutionalizing Subtle Exclusion

Tobacco baron and McGill benefactor William Macdonald once referred to McGill students as “the grown-up children of all Canada.”<sup>202</sup> The children of all Canada, however, were not equally represented among the student body at McGill or its rival, the University of Toronto. Axelrod notes that, “overwhelmingly white, Anglo-Celtic, Protestant, and to a lesser degree Catholic, English Canadian universities were determined to *preserve their cultural mix*. Like those administering immigration policy, university officials did this not by banning other racialized minority groups but by rigidly controlling their numbers.”<sup>203</sup> As Sarah Ahmed writes, “the institutionalization of whiteness involves work.”<sup>204</sup>

Axelrod adds that, “while a small number of ‘coloured’ youth from other Commonwealth countries were admitted to Canadian universities, this did not augur equality of treatment for racial minorities.”<sup>205</sup> Though many students from the British Caribbean received their medical training at McGill in the preceding decades, in 1938, McGill’s Dean of Medicine J.C. Simpson still lamented to Principal Douglas that they could take “very few” black doctors.<sup>206</sup> Very few Indigenous students attended McGill due to national colonial policy.<sup>207</sup> The Indian Act of 1876

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<sup>202</sup> Quoted in Frost, *McGill University, Vol II*, 1984, 15.

<sup>203</sup> Axelrod, “McGill University,” 27. Emphasis added.

<sup>204</sup> Sarah Ahmed, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2012), 39.

<sup>205</sup> Axelrod, *Making a Middle Class*, 34.

<sup>206</sup> Axelrod, *Making a Middle Class*, 34; Morton shares that in 1912, an estimated twenty percent of doctors in Barbados had studied at McGill. Despite evident restrictions, she notes that unlike Queen’s, McGill’s Medical faculty never officially banned Black students. Suzanne Morton, *Black McGill* (Montreal: Self published, 2019), 6, 29.

<sup>207</sup> Morton provides biographical information on McGill’s first Indigenous students, George Edward Bomberly, Kanyen’kehàka, Six Nations, MD, 1875; Thomas Daniel Green, Kanyen’kehàka, Six Nations, Engineering, 1882; Joseph H. ‘Teronianente’ Jacobs,

revoked the Indian status of those graduating from university, discouraging Indigenous students from enrolling until it was amended in 1951.<sup>208</sup> With the goal of preserving their lack of cultural mix, McGill administrators became especially keen to limit Jewish enrollment.

McGill never officially banned Jews from admission and had even given the first honorary doctorate bestowed upon a Jew in the English-speaking world, to Rabbi Abraham DeSola, in 1858.<sup>209</sup> Yet Jewish enrollment was restricted until after the Second World War. In his biography of McGill alumnus A.M. Klein, Usher Caplan writes that during his student days in the 1920s, “McGill’s attitude towards its Jews was in some ways typical of how Montreal’s English establishment in general regarded this eager element in its midst - as privileged guests, who were welcome to enter but barred from ownership, and who were expected to learn all they could but not forget their place.”<sup>210</sup>

Administrators introduced restrictions after Jewish enrolment began to significantly increase in the 1920s. While Jews had constituted a modest 6.8 percent of the student body in

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Kaneien’kehá:ka, Kahnawake, BA 1911, MD 1915; Angus Splicer, Kaneien’kehá:ka, Kahnawake, enrolled in Law 1914 but declared MIA at Ypres in 1916; Festus Johnson, Kanyen’kehàka, Six Nations, graduated in 1917. Morton *Indigenous McGill*, 7-9.

<sup>208</sup> Morton, *Indigenous McGill*, 7. She notes that the policy of ‘involuntary enfranchisement’ upon graduation was repealed in 1880, reintroduced and repealed in 1920, reintroduced in 1933, and finally repealed in 1951. For more on the history of Indigenous university students in Canada, see Blair Stonechild, *The New Buffalo: The Struggle for Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2006.)

<sup>209</sup> Michael Brown, “On Campus in the Thirties: Antipathy, Support, and Indifference,” in *Nazi Germany, Canadian Responses: Confronting Antisemitism in the Shadow of War* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2012), 163.

<sup>210</sup> Usher Caplan, *Like the One that Dreamed: A Portrait of A.M. Klein* (Montreal: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1982), 45.

1913, they formed a quarter of the first year class in the 1924-25 school year, with especially high numbers in the faculties of Arts, Law, Dentistry, and Medicine.<sup>211</sup>

McGill staff and administrators reacted with alarm to this demographic shift, fearing the displacement of the young Anglo-Protestant men meant to run the country. None was more vocal than Dean of Arts Ira Mackay, who declared that, “as a race of men their traditions and practices do not fit in with a high civilization in a very new country.”<sup>212</sup> In 1928, Dean Mackay told Jewish student David Lewis, who had contested an unusually low grade, “I don’t like it when people of your race, who have been admitted to Canada from backward countries, who enjoy this country’s freedom and opportunities, spend time attacking and denigrating our great society.”<sup>213</sup>

In a letter to Principal Currie, Dean Mackay warned that, “the learned professions in the English speaking communities of this Province are largely recruited from McGill University, and the future of these professions is, therefore, largely in our hands.” He further cautioned that,

there can be no doubt about the danger to the University every way of entertaining a large number of Jews. The experience of all Universities in the United States show unquestionably that wherever the Jews begin to come in any very large numbers into the libraries, students’ unions, clubs, debating societies and other student activities, the Christian students immediately begin a steady continuous retreat.<sup>214</sup>

Mackay demanded that measures be taken to curb Jewish enrolment with formal approval from McGill’s Board of Governors.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> Pierre Anctil, “Interlude of Hostility: Judeo-Christian Relations in Quebec in the Interwar Period, 1919-39,” in *Antisemitism in Canada: History and Interpretation*, ed. Alan Davies (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006), 142.

<sup>212</sup> Quoted in Ira Robinson, *A History of Antisemitism in Canada* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2015), 71.

<sup>213</sup> Quoted in David Lewis, *The Good Fight: Political Memoirs, 1909-1958* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1981), 23.

<sup>214</sup> Letter, Ira Mackay to Arthur Currie, April 23, 1926. “Jewish Students” (1921-1933), RG 2, Container 46, File 445, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>215</sup> Brown, “On Campus in the Thirties,” 158.

Currie's administration acted to protect the advantages of Anglo-Christian applicants by instituting new barriers to Jews. In 1926, McGill stopped accepting 'Hebrew' students from outside the province of Quebec.<sup>216</sup> In 1928, new standards of admission were informally created for Jews, whose minimum high school matriculation marks were raised to 70 and eventually 75, in contrast to the requirement of 60 for non-Jewish applicants.<sup>217</sup> They also introduced a *numerus clausus* quota to limit the number of Jewish students in the faculty of Medicine, putting a 10 percent ceiling on Jewish applicants who were not disqualified by the more exclusive admission requirements. While administrators quietly followed Dean Mackay's recommendations, the issue was never officially brought before the Board of Governors or Senate.<sup>218</sup>

Over the next decade, the university's new policies drastically reduced Jewish enrolment. In 1933, Principal Currie reported that he was pleased to see only one Jew in incoming class at the Faculty of Law.<sup>219</sup> Forty percent of McGill's Law students had been Jewish in the 1924-25 school year; by 1935-1936 that number had fallen to a mere 5 percent.<sup>220</sup> McGill continued jealously monitoring Jewish enrolment into the next decade. In August 1944, Principal James remarked in his diary that he had met with the registrar, T.H. Matthews, and the Dean of Engineering, J.J. O'Neill, to discuss a recent increase in the number of Jewish students to the Faculty of Engineering. The three men "agreed to apply to the Engineering Faculty the same differential standard of admission [...] that now applies in Arts and Science."<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> Ancil, "Interlude of Hostility," 142.

<sup>217</sup> Robinson, *A History of Antisemitism*, 72.

<sup>218</sup> Robinson, *A History of Antisemitism*, 73.

<sup>219</sup> Robinson, *A History of Antisemitism*, 72.

<sup>220</sup> Ancil, "Interlude of Hostility," 143.

<sup>221</sup> Diary of Frank Cyril James, 1 August 1944, MG 1017, Container 49, Frank Cyril James Fonds, MUA.

McGill's discriminatory policies toward Jewish enrolment fit within a larger national and continental trend in higher education. Ira Robinson notes that, "the Canadian situation entirely paralleled trends in the United States, where, between 1920 and 1940, the percentage of Jews enrolled in Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons dropped from 46.94 to 6.45."<sup>222</sup> Restrictions at American universities forced Jewish Americans to apply to Canadian institutions; in 1930, 1935, and 1939, 80 percent of American students admitted to Dalhousie were Jewish.<sup>223</sup>

Elsewhere in Canada, the percentage of Jewish students admitted to the University of Manitoba similarly declined during the interwar period, Jewish doctors were unable to secure clinical positions at the University of Toronto until after the Second World War, and Regina General Hospital refused to hire two qualified Jewish doctors.<sup>224</sup> Queen's University Principal R. Bruce Taylor echoed Dean Mackay's sentiments, lamenting that, "the presence of so many Jews tended to lower the tone of Canadian universities."<sup>225</sup>

When McGill's restrictive admissions policy encouraged Jews to enroll at the Université de Montréal, its students protested their presence. In 1934, a group of interns called a strike at Notre Dame Hospital to protest the admission of Jewish intern Samuel Rabinovitch, who was forced to resign after three days.<sup>226</sup> Noting the contrast between French and English Canadian styles of anti-Semitism, Pierre Anctil observes that, "as French nationalist publications quarreled publicly among themselves about how many Jews were acceptable in the country,

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<sup>222</sup> Robinson, *A History of Antisemitism*, 73.

<sup>223</sup> Axelrod, *Making a Middle Class*, 32.

<sup>224</sup> Robinson, *A History of Antisemitism*, 74.

<sup>225</sup> Robinson, *A History of Antisemitism*, 71.

<sup>226</sup> Anctil, "Interlude of Hostility," 147-148.

Anglo-Canadians quietly implemented discriminatory policies in their institutions without broadcasting their prejudices.”<sup>227</sup>

Beyond higher education, anti-Semitic discourse pervaded Canada in the 1930s, from the Canadian Social Credit Movement to Quebec’s fascist National Unity Party, whose leader Adrien Arcand spoke at McGill in February 1937.<sup>228</sup> Very few politicians or immigration officials proved willing to come to the aid of European Jewish refugees, as Irving Abella and Harold Troper have detailed in *None Is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948*.<sup>229</sup>

Numerous university administrators and faculty members across Canada were openly sympathetic to Italy and Germany’s new fascist regimes. In 1934, University of Toronto president H.J. Cody openly discussed his support for Italian fascism. Just a few months after the introduction of the Nuremberg laws, McGill Professor of Chemistry E.W.R. Staecie shared his admiration for Hitler’s regime after a recent visit to Germany in which he witnessed “no sort of fights, riots, or general disturbances.” He added that anti-Semitic discrimination was justified due to Jews’ alleged position as “large mortgage holders”.<sup>230</sup> The administration and Board of Governors offered no response to Staecie’s comments.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> Anctil, “Interlude of Hostility,” 159.

<sup>228</sup> Axelrod, *Making a Middle Class*, 137. For more on anti-semitism in the Social Credit movement, see Janine Stingel, *Social Discredit: Anti-Semitism, Social Credit, and the Jewish Response* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000), and Alvin Finkel, *The Social Credit Phenomenon*. 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989). For more on Canadian fascist movements, see Lita-Rose Betcherman, *The Swastika and the Maple Leaf: Fascist Movements in Canada in the Thirties* (Toronto, Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1975).

<sup>229</sup> Irving M. Abella, and Harold Martin Troper, *None Is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948*. 3rd ed. (Toronto: Key Porter, 2000).

<sup>230</sup> Brown, “On Campus in the Thirties,” 150.

<sup>231</sup> Axelrod, “McGill University,” 27.



## Abandoning Jewish Refugee Scholars

Despite widespread anti-Semitism, many western scholars *did* act in solidarity with their European Jewish counterparts. In March 1933, the international community's attention turned to the plight of German Jewish scholars as they were dismissed from their posts and sought refuge at other universities around the world. David Zimmerman observes that while organizations were formed in 1933 to support refugee scholars in the United States and Great Britain, Canada was especially slow to respond, finally organizing the Canadian Society for the Protection of Science and Learning (CSPSL) in 1939. He argues that, "widespread anti-Semitism within Canadian universities delayed an organized response to the academic refugee crisis." In North America, the Carnegie Foundation fully subsidized the placement of qualified refugees at universities. By June 1938, American institutions had accepted 247 displaced scholars; Canada had accepted only six.<sup>232</sup>

In his examination of Canadian universities' failure to come to the aid of Jewish refugee scholars, Zimmerman singles out McGill officials.<sup>233</sup> In 1939, McGill registrar T.H. Matthews wrote to Principal Lewis Douglas that Upper Canada College principal Terence MacDermot had recommended the university hire refugee scholars to reinvigorate the lagging Arts faculty. Matthews hoped McGill would accept refugee students as "a good Samaritan gesture across the Atlantic." Douglas warned him that, "this is a controversial, even dangerous subject, on which much embarrassment might develop from public discussion."<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> David Zimmerman, "'Narrow-Minded People': Canadian Universities and the Academic Refugee Crises, 1933-1941," *Canadian Historical Review* 88 (June 2007): 292-294.

<sup>233</sup> Zimmerman, "'Narrow-Minded People,'" 292-294.

<sup>234</sup> Brown, "On Campus in the Thirties," 167; Matthews and Douglas quoted in Michiel Horn, *Academic Freedom*, 138.

McGill organized a Montreal committee of the CSPSL in August 1939, and Matthews proposed to the British SPSL that they would welcome a woman scholar at the Royal Victoria College. He advised SPSL executive secretary Esther Simpson that “it would probably be wise to select a Jewish woman only if her social qualifications were exceptional,” prompting her to comment to a colleague that she wondered “whether McGill University goes by the Nuremberg Laws.”<sup>235</sup>

In March 1941, Montreal’s CSPSL chapter requested a French woman scholar for the RVC. J. Marguerite Bowie, secretary of the International Federation of University Women, offered two French speaking candidates, Ms. Finkelstein, a Latvian barrister who studied international law, and Dr. Peters, a Czech language instructor with a doctorate in philosophy. Principal Frank Cyril James telegrammed Bowie, “Senate of McGill refuses appointment of Finkelstein stop considering Peters favourable is she Gentile.” Peters was Jewish.<sup>236</sup>

Bowie told James that her organization could not submit any scholars to McGill, condemning the university for engaging in racial discrimination “when all the people of the British empire are united to uphold the standards of justice, freedom and democracy.” In his reply, James lied to Bowie, claiming that the RVC charter required that all tutorial positions be held by gentiles, and “frankly, I don’t think that the matter is one of sufficient urgency at the moment to occupy the attention of men who are very busy with war activities.” The RVC charter contained no such clause; Zimmerman reveals that “some of the powerful and wealthy patrons” of the university had protested the idea of accepting a Jewish refugee scholar. For her part,

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<sup>235</sup> Zimmerman, “Narrow-Minded People,” 311-312.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 312-314.

Bowie wrote to Simpson that she intended to launch an international campaign against anti-Semitism at McGill.<sup>237</sup>

McGill's attitude toward Jewish refugee scholars demonstrates the enduring legacy of anti-Semitism at Canadian universities even at a time when other institutions in Great Britain and the United States managed to offer assistance. The handful of Jewish refugee scholars admitted to Canadian universities through the CSPSL found places at the University of Toronto, University of Saskatchewan, Queen's, and Dalhousie.<sup>238</sup>

Administrators' cold attitude toward refugees reflects a longstanding prioritization of gentiles over Jews, even as the latter were forced to flee Europe. In 1933, McGill students formed a chapter of the International Student Service to assist refugees, including Jews. William Hasler, a student member, invited Principal Currie to attend a meeting of the organization. Currie declined, commenting that,

I frankly confess that I have more sympathy for students... driven out of McGill because they lack financial resources to see them through... I believe many students in Germany have suffered persecution. I would throw no cold water on efforts to help them... but were I able to contribute more than I do now, I should give my support here.<sup>239</sup>

Currie's comments echo previous conceptualizations of Jews existing in opposition to Anglo-Protestant students.

In 1940, Principal James made an offer to British universities to place the children of British academics and professionals among the McGill community, and even collected contributions from faculty members before receiving confirmation from British officials. The plan was ultimately abandoned. The energy directed toward this scheme contrasts sharply with

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<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid., 303.

<sup>239</sup> Quoted in Brown, "On Campus in the Thirties," 165.

the administration's dismissive attitude toward the more practicable request for assistance from the CSPSL.<sup>240</sup>

McGill's young new Principal, Frank Cyril James, proved to be the most influential decision-maker at the university in the 1940s. James had assumed the role of Principal on 1 January 1940, taking over for Douglas, an American who thought a British subject ought to lead the university in wartime.<sup>241</sup> Frost describes James, a London-born professor of economics, as a man with "a marked respect for those who sat in the seats of power."<sup>242</sup> James came to enjoy widespread connections to authorities in Ottawa, and headed up the Committee on Postwar Reconstruction spearheaded by Minister of Pensions and National Health Ian Mackenzie in 1941 to advise cabinet on post-war federal economic policy.

Sandra Djwa points out that the young Principal "[made] himself the bottleneck through which all university business passed. He never made a public statement without first consulting the Chancellor and Board of Governors and quickly came to enjoy the full confidence of the Montreal business establishment."<sup>243</sup> James's secretary, Dorothy McMurray, calls him "the Architect of Modern McGill," emphasizing the force he exerted over the university's decision-making bodies:

In the silence of his library on the top floor of 1200 Pine Avenue West, overlooking the great city, he would think things through far into the night hours, and decide what must be done. Then he would set up the interminable, endless committees; and at these hundreds of committees he was the supreme master who, in the end, generally won most of what he wanted: he carried the day, things were decided pretty much as he recommended - nearly always.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Form letter, F.C. James, 29 November 1940, RG 2, Container 115, File 3096, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>241</sup> Frost, *McGill University, Vol II*, 1984, 211.

<sup>242</sup> Frost, *McGill University, Vol II*, 1984, 214.

<sup>243</sup> Djwa, *The Politics of the Imagination*, 176.

<sup>244</sup> McMurray, *Four Principals*, 48, 51.

McGill's Senate could never have passed its racial exclusion policy without the dedicated intervention of Principal James.

## Chapter 3: Passing a Racist Admissions Policy

### McGill Mobilizes

When Canada declared war in the fall of 1939, the McGill community channeled all its energy toward the war effort. University officials coordinated with military authorities, enrolling all physically capable male students “of British nationality” in military training, hosting the Canadian Women’s Army Corps at Macdonald College and collaborating with the National Research Council, the Wartime Bureau of Technical Personnel, and the Canadian Red Cross.<sup>245</sup>

Between 1941 and 1943, science professors addressed the country via the McGill National Broadcast Series, put on by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to educate the public on the theme of “Science at War.”<sup>246</sup> In October 1942, when a labour shortage threatened the wheat harvest, five hundred students joined a ‘harvest train’ to the prairies to lend a hand.<sup>247</sup>

Chemistry department chairman Otto Maass was named special assistant to C.J. Mackenzie, the director of the National Research Council. In addition to studying RDX, anthrax and rinderpest, McGill scientists contributed to the development of atomic weapons: one third of the 70 people who worked in the atomic laboratory at l’Université de Montréal were McGill staff

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<sup>245</sup> Frost, *McGill University Vol II*, 219-223.

<sup>246</sup> “McGill National Broadcast Series (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) 1941-1943”, RG 2, Container 80, File 1558, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>247</sup> Frost, *McGill University, Vol II*, 225.

or graduates.<sup>248</sup> Overseas, 5568 McGill students served in uniform, 298 were killed in action, and 627 received medals.<sup>249</sup>

And yet, in the midst of all this activity, the McGill Senate took the time to pass a policy banning Japanese Canadians on racial grounds. Why did the busy McGill Senate come to pass such a policy? How did this project come to consume so much of administrators' time and attention in a period of wartime mobilization when they had little energy to spare? In this chapter, I describe the events leading up to the passing of the racial exclusion policy, outlining the positions taken by the Registrar, Principal, and numerous influential Deans, Governors, and faculty members.

### **No Rush to Exclude**

On 8 December 1941, the day after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, Principal James telephoned Inspector Lemieux of the RCMP to discuss the position of 'enemy students' at McGill. He recounted in his diary,

[Lemieux] said that the RCMP expected to register all Japanese nationals within the next few days but would not intern any except those who were suspected to be dangerous characters. It was his opinion that natives of Hungary, Finland and Rumania would not even be required to register. I suggested that, in light of these facts, it seemed appropriate that the University should allow enemy alien students to continue to study their academic courses. Lemieux agreed. I further suggested that in regard to military training we might exclude Japanese, Italian and German *nationals* but allow the others to train in the ordinary fashion. Lemieux said that this was entirely appropriate and if any regulations to the contrary came along he would immediately let me know.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> Frost, *McGill University, Vol II*, 227; Donald Avery, *The Science of War: Canadian Scientists and Allied Military during the Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 208, 210.

<sup>249</sup> Featherstonhaugh, *McGill University at War*, 130.

<sup>250</sup> Diary of Frank Cyril James, 8 December 1941, MG 1017, Container 47, Frank Cyril James Fonds, MUA. Emphasis added.

Both the Principal and the RCMP Inspector carefully differentiated between Japanese nationals and ‘the others.’ They considered Japanese nationals alongside ‘aliens’ from European countries at war with the Allied powers, focusing on national rather than racial origin.

In this initial conversation, James suggested to Lemieux that Japanese nationals be allowed to continue their studies but not their military training. This policy would have affected very few, if any students. The Senate’s “Report on the Registration of Foreign Students” list one unnamed male engineering student from Japan for the 1940-1941 session.<sup>251</sup> No Japanese students were registered for the 1941-1942 session.<sup>252</sup> An unnamed female music student from Japan was registered for the 1942-1943 session.<sup>253</sup> This student was not listed in the Student Directory for that year, nor is there any trace of her in the yearbook. Three Japanese Canadians were enrolled for the 1941-1942 session; second year Science student Kiyokazu Jack Momose, and first year Medicine students George Shimotakahara and Satoru Watanabe.

As detailed in Chapter 2, after 7 December 1941, the Canadian government introduced a series of racially defined carceral measures against both Japanese nationals and Japanese Canadians, culminating in the announcement of Order-in-Council P.C. 1486 on 24 February 1942. After his call to Inspector Lemieux, there is no indication that James devoted any further attention over the winter term to the three Japanese Canadian students at McGill.

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<sup>251</sup> Senate Meeting Minutes, 19 February 1941, Senate Minute Book 1940-1943, RG 8, Container 11, File 356, Senate, MUA. This was most likely Edward P. Fichter, who is listed in the Student Directory as third year engineering student with the home address of 35 Yama moti-dori, 3 Choma, Kobe, Japan. Fichter does not appear to have graduated from McGill. *McGill University Directory of Students, 1940-1941* (Montreal: McGill University, 1941).

<sup>252</sup> Senate Meeting Minutes, 25 February 1942, Senate Minute Book 1940-1943, RG 8, Container 11, File 356, Senate, MUA.

<sup>253</sup> Senate Meeting Minutes, 17 February 1943, Senate Minute Book 1940-1943, RG 8, Container 11, File 356, Senate, MUA.



## James Shifts His Position

The issue of Nisei admissions surfaced on 2 April, when E.B. Stouffer, Secretary of the Association of American Universities, wrote to James to inquire if McGill, a member of the Association, would be open to admitting Japanese American students.<sup>254</sup> In the United States a group of prominent academics and volunteers from religious communities had formed the National Japanese American Student Relocation Council (NJASRC) in the months after President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066. Presidents Robert Sproul of the University of California and Lee Paul Sieg of the University of Washington had taken the lead in advocating for the acceptance of Nisei students at post-secondary institutions east of the Pacific coast. The Assistant Secretary of War, John H. McCloy, had given his blessing but offered no resources to the organization.<sup>255</sup>

In 1941, 3530 Japanese American students had been registered at American universities across the country. Nisei post-secondary enrollment plummeted when all Japanese Americans were exiled from the Pacific coast in the spring of 1942; by 1943, only 1484 Japanese American students were registered. Stouffer and other NJASRC volunteers contacted hundreds of post-secondary institutions to facilitate the admission of displaced Japanese American students. By the time it ceased operations in 1946, the NJASRC had helped 4300 students enroll at 600 colleges and universities nation-wide.<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> Letter, E.B. Stouffer to F.C. James, 2 April 1942, RG 2, Container 82, File 1692, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>255</sup> Robert W. O'Brien, "Student Relocation," *Common Ground* 3, no. 4 (Summer 1943): 74.

<sup>256</sup> Robert W. O'Brien, *The College Nisei*, (Palo Alto: Pacific Books, 1949), 82, 84, 90, 109.

James forwarded Stouffer's letter to F.C. Blair, the director of the Immigration Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources, asking him to clarify the federal government's position regarding the admission of Japanese Americans.<sup>257</sup> Whereas Inspector Lemieux had carefully differentiated between Canadians and enemy nationals, Blair spoke in racial terms, mimicking the language used in Order-In-Council P.C. 1486. "In view of the restrictions that have been placed upon *persons of Japanese race* now in Canada," he replied, "this Department could not offer any encouragement to the admission of American students of Japanese race."<sup>258</sup>

When James wrote to Stouffer to decline the admission of Japanese American students to McGill, he emphasized that university officials were following federal instructions, professing that, "we should have no opportunity to accept them, whether we were willing to do so or not."<sup>259</sup> To Blair, he wrote, "the decision of your department immensely simplifies matters for us at the University."<sup>260</sup> James's statements suggest that he was relieved to defer to national authorities, washing McGill's hands of responsibility for its own admissions policy.

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<sup>257</sup> Letter, F.C. James to F.C. Blair, 7 April 1942, RG 2, Container 82, File 1692, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>258</sup> Letter, F.C. Blair to F.C. James, 17 April 1942, RG 2, Container 82, File 1692, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA. Emphasis added.

<sup>259</sup> Letter, F.C. James to E.B. Stouffer, 18 April 1942, RG 2, Container 82, File 1692, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>260</sup> Letter, F.C. James to F.C. Blair, 18 April 1942, RG 2 Container 82, File 1692, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

## Applications Arrive

The first application from a Japanese Canadian student exiled from the University of British Columbia reached McGill's registrar, T.H. Matthews, on 14 April 1942.<sup>261</sup> He offered no immediate reply. On 8 July, Matthews wrote to James about another unnamed Japanese Canadian student from British Columbia who had visited him that morning in his office.<sup>262</sup> Matthews advised the Principal that, "some of the Japanese students who have been sent out of British Columbia are very highly recommended, both by the University authorities out there, and by other people who know them well. I think we should admit as many as we possibly can and decide to do so quickly." He reported that he had referred the Nisei applications to the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Alien Refugees, Cyrus Macmillan, the Dean of Arts and Science and Liberal Member of Parliament for Prince Edward Island.<sup>263</sup>

James agreed that the Committee on Alien Refugees ought to assess the Japanese Canadian students' applications. In his letter to Dean Macmillan on 9 July, James abandoned the distinctions he had made between Japanese nationals and Japanese Canadians in December 1941. "Since these students are technically alien enemies," he wrote, "although many of them have shown themselves to be good Canadians in the past, I think it would be appropriate that all such

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<sup>261</sup> This application may have come from UBC student Hajime Kagetsu, who reported to the International Student Service in the spring of 1942 that he had already applied to McGill. "Information about the Students of Japanese Racial Origin," nd, Box 10, Folder Vol 44 Docs UBC, Tadashi Jack & Kanaye Kay Kagetsu Fonds, NNM.

<sup>262</sup> Letter, T.H. Matthews to F.C. James, 8 July 1942, RG 2, Container 82, File 1692, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>263</sup> Letter, T.H. Matthews to F.C. James, 8 July 1942, RG 2, Container 82, File 1692, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

applications should be submitted to your Committee on Alien Refugees, and each case considered carefully on its merit.”<sup>264</sup>

In his reply, Macmillan pointed out that the Committee on Alien Refugees had been created to process applications from (mostly Jewish) European refugees released from internment camps. “As Japanese students do not technically belong to that category,” he wrote, “I am referring their applications to the Admissions Committees of the Arts, Science and Commerce divisions as soon as I can get a quorum.”<sup>265</sup>

Macmillan provided further details about the four applications McGill had received thus far, noting that one was applying for an upper year in Commerce, and three were applying for an upper year in Arts. He explained that, “Two of the latter have applied for admission to the Fourth Year in the hope of receiving the B.A. degree at the end of one year of residence. As at least two years residence is required under the regulations, this request can not [sic] be granted.”<sup>266</sup>

All University of British Columbia undergraduate students exiled at the end of their third year of study faced the same obstacle. UBC administrators had neglected to arrange to grant degrees to students completing their final year of study elsewhere; other universities’ regulations potentially precluded them from granting degrees to students who completed only their final year there.

In a letter to his former student, George Yamashita, on 11 August 1942, UBC Commerce professor Ellis Morrow demonstrated that he had considered this particular complication.

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<sup>264</sup> Letter, F.C. James to Cyrus Macmillan, 9 July 1942, RG 2, Container 82, File 1692, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>265</sup> Letter, Cyrus Macmillan to F.C. James, 15 July 1942, RG 2, Container 82, File 1692, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>266</sup> Letter, Cyrus Macmillan to F.C. James, 15 July 1942, RG 2, Container 82, File 1692, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

Yamashita had recently moved to Montreal just short of completing his B.A. degree. Counselling him about his next steps, Morrow wrote that “another possibility would be for you to take a final year at McGill or some other institution provided that you could fulfill the requirements of the final year, whatever they may be. It would be necessary for you to find out how you could work it. [...] All universities will require you to take your complete final year with the institution that grants you a degree.”<sup>267</sup>

University administrators might have made special exceptions with their regulations to accommodate Japanese Canadian students if UBC administrators and the federal government had chosen to advocate for them. While Ellis Morrow made inquiries on behalf of former Commerce students and the Registrar, C.B. Wood, cooperated with the International Student Service in its survey of Nisei students, the University of British Columbia failed to mount a significant campaign for the acceptance of its exiled students at other Canadian universities.<sup>268</sup>

### **The Department of External Affairs Abdicates Responsibility**

In August 1942, the Department of External Affairs briefly turned its attention to the issue. According to historian Ann Sunahara, External Affairs contained Japanese Canadians’

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<sup>267</sup> Letter, George Yamashita to E.H. Morrow, 2 August 1942; Letter, E.H. Morrow to George Yamashita, 11 August 1942, Box 1, File 1-6, Japanese Canadian Commerce Students Collection/*Viewpoints* Magazine, UBC Archives, Vancouver B.C. Yamashita planned to pursue postgraduate studies.

<sup>268</sup> In his appendix ““Note on Japanese-Canadian students in Canadian Universities 1942-1946,” La Violette writes that, “The British Columbia Security Commission formulated no plan for moving students east. The Student Christian Movement and the International Student Service took an interest in assisting them, but the staff of the Commission was already overloaded with work, and as no policy had been established for differential treatment of any groups among the Japanese, nothing in particular was done for students.” La Violette, *The Canadian Japanese and World War II*, 305.

“main defenders” within the federal government.<sup>269</sup> Nonetheless, a series of interdepartmental memos on the topic of “Attendance at Canadian Universities of Persons of Japanese Race” reveal that while the department did not actively encourage policies of exclusion such as the one McGill’s Senate would come to pass, neither did they discourage them.

In August, Matthews and University Of Western Ontario registrar K.P.R. Neville both wrote to the Department of National Defence to inquire about the federal government’s attitude towards the admission of Japanese Canadians to universities east of British Columbia.<sup>270</sup> The inquiry was passed on to the Department of External Affairs, whose first action was to investigate the official policy taken by the United States. Prime Minister Mackenzie King, acting as the Secretary of State for External Affairs, consulted the Canadian Minister to the United States on 27 August, writing that, “my impression is that American universities, outside the evacuation areas, have been encouraged to admit individual Japanese students to whom no objection could be taken on security grounds.”<sup>271</sup>

Under-Secretary Norman Robertson circulated a memorandum titled ‘Attendance at Canadian Universities of Persons of Japanese Race’, expressing that, “I would not like to see our universities outside the Protected Areas exclude students on racial or national grounds.” Despite his professed sympathy for Japanese Canadians, Robertson inappropriately compared them to enemy aliens, adding that “satisfactory arrangements and suitable safeguards have been made to

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<sup>269</sup> Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism*, 15.

<sup>270</sup> Letter, Norman Robertson to K.P.R. Neville, 27 August 1942, File 3464-W-40, Department of External Affairs Records, LAC; Note for Mr. Rive, 12 September 1942, File 3464-W-40, Department of External Affairs Records, LAC.

<sup>271</sup> Letter, Secretary of State for External Affairs to the Canadian Minister to the United States, 27 August 1942, File 3464-W-40, Department of External Affairs Records, LAC.

enable a number of enemy aliens of German and Austrian nationality to continue their studies at Canadian universities.”<sup>272</sup>

On 29 August, the Canadian Minister to the United States, Leighton McCarthy, replied to Mackenzie King that, according to the State Department, the American government had no explicit position toward Japanese American students. “No request has been made for such an expression of policy,” he relayed, “and meantime Japanese [American] students have been entering United States universities and studying the subjects which they desire to study. If any expression of policy were to be made it could be expected to follow the lines at present pursued.”

<sup>273</sup> The State Department evidently had not apprised him of the activities of the National Japanese American Student Relocation Council.

The Cabinet War Committee discussed Robertson’s memorandum at a meeting on 9 September. The Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs, A. Rive, informed Matthews three days later that, “It was agreed that the matter is one for universities to decide for themselves and the Government has adopted no official attitude in this connection. Under these circumstances your university is free to take whatever stand you wish in this regard without any sanction by the Government.”<sup>274</sup> The Department had effectively abandoned UBC’s displaced students and all Japanese Canadian university applicants. The memo illustrates that McGill officials knew the

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<sup>272</sup> Memorandum, Norman Robertson to Mr. Heeney, 27 August 1942, File 3464-W-40, Department of External Affairs Records, LAC. Norman Robertson’s sympathies were limited. Sunahara notes that he considered all Japanese Canadians who complained to the Spanish Consul to be disloyal. Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism*, 101.

<sup>273</sup> Telegram, Canadian Minister to the United States to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, 29 August 1942 File 3464-W-40, Department of External Affairs Records, LAC.

<sup>274</sup> Letter, A. Rive to T.H. Matthews, 15 September 1942, File 3464-W-40, Department of External Affairs Records, LAC.

federal government did not prohibit Japanese Canadian admission and that the final decision rested in their hands.

### **The BCSC Reaches Out**

In 1943, Japanese Canadians continued to apply to McGill. Having rejected at least three applicants for the fall term of 1942, Matthews had admitted one Japanese Canadian student, Ryo Otsuki, to begin his first year of a Science degree in the fall of 1943.<sup>275</sup> Though the Principal and Dean Macmillan had conveyed their disapproval of Japanese Canadian admissions, Matthews had chosen to interpret Dean Macmillan's assertion that Japanese Canadians were not refugees as an instruction "that applications from Canadian students of Japanese ancestry were to be treated like any other applications."<sup>276</sup>

A placement officer from the British Columbia Security Commission finally reached out to McGill on behalf of Nisei students.<sup>277</sup> On 2 September, G.E. Trueman visited James to appeal for the admission of seven unnamed Japanese Canadians who had been 'cleared' by the RCMP. James avoided giving Trueman an answer, telling Macmillan that he had "pointed out that this is

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<sup>275</sup> *McGill University Directory of Students, 1943-1944*, (Montreal: McGill University, 1944): 60.

<sup>276</sup> Memo, T.H. Matthews to F.C. James, 19 October 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>277</sup> While there are records of Trueman and other BCSC officials advocating for some Japanese Canadian students, the Commission was obstructive to others. BCSC officials pressured Mits Sumiya to work at a road camp and sent him to the Angler internment camp when he refused. Teruo Ted Harada was accepted at the University of Manitoba "but they wouldn't let me out of Slocan." Instead of continuing his studies, Harada stayed in Slocan cutting wood to support his family for four years. When Yutaka 'Coby' Kobayashi asked the BCSC for permission to leave a Manitoba sugar beet farm and move to Toronto because they were unable to cover their living expenses, he was denied. Mits Sumiya, 2012, "Mits Sumiya: An Interview with a UBC Japanese Canadian Student of 1942," UBC Japanese Canadian Students of 1942, doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.14288/1.0107961>; *A Degree of Justice*, 27-28, 56.



a matter which must be decided by the Senate and, if it becomes a matter of controversy, be passed upon by the Senate.”<sup>278</sup>

On the day of Trueman’s visit, Matthews wrote a memorandum to the Principal regarding an unnamed Japanese Canadian applicant Dean Macmillan whom had refused admission to the Faculty of Arts and Science, “only because she is of Japanese descent.” The Principal’s secretary, Dorothy McMurray, wrote on the memo that Macmillan “absolutely refused to see her” and had claimed that Muriel Roscoe, warden of the Royal Victoria College, would agree with him about rejecting her.<sup>279</sup>

James produced a new excuse for not admitting Japanese Canadians. He told Matthews that, “the problem is not really a simple one, since a definite injustice might be done if government policy was interpreted in a manner that conferred upon Canadian-born Japanese students privileges which are denied owing to the war to other Canadian citizens.”<sup>280</sup> The Department of External Affairs had officially empowered universities to determine their admissions policies toward Japanese Canadians, and a representative of the BCSC had appealed to him to admit a small number of displaced students, but the normally commanding Principal refused to answer Matthews directly. James could have given approval to admit more Japanese Canadian students, but instead he portrayed their applications as a problem.

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<sup>278</sup> Letter, F.C. James to Cyrus Macmillan, 3 September 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA. G.E. Trueman would go on to admit that, “The reason for the mass evacuation was not because of the Japanese but because of the whites.” Quoted in Janice Patton, *The Exodus of the Japanese* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), 13.

<sup>279</sup> Memo, T.H. Matthews to F.C. James, 2 September 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>280</sup> Letter, F.C. James to T.H. Matthews, 3 September 1943, RG 2 Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

Avoiding a decision, he reached out to faculty members for input. John Johnston O'Neill, Dean of Engineering, wrote to him that when the subject of admitting Japanese Canadian students had arisen in 1942, "I canvassed various members of the Engineering Faculty at that time and the opinion was unanimous that they should not be allowed in Engineering."<sup>281</sup>

James informed Matthews that Dean Macmillan had surveyed his faculty and equally found unanimous agreement that Japanese Canadians should not be admitted.<sup>282</sup> Two days later, Matthews reported back that he had spoken to eight faculty members who Dean Macmillan failed to poll. He added that, "the applicants are naturally anxious to know whether they are to be admitted here, and to delay on our decisions until the end of the month when the term actually opens, perhaps in the hope that they will have gone elsewhere, and then turn down those who are still applying is unjust, and is not the McGill way of deciding such a question."<sup>283</sup> A week later, Matthews informed James that, contrary to Macmillan's claims, Roscoe reported that he had not spoken to her about the admission of Japanese Canadian women students.<sup>284</sup>

### **James Neglects to Consult the 'Expert'**

While James consulted the Deans of various faculties, he apparently neglected to seek the wisdom of McGill Sociology professor, Forrest LaViolette.<sup>285</sup> The *Montreal Star* had hailed

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<sup>281</sup> Letter, J.J. O'Neill to James, 9 September 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>282</sup> Letter, F.C. James to T.H. Matthews, 14 September 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>283</sup> Memo, T.H. Matthews to F.C. James, 16 September 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>284</sup> Memo, T.H. Matthews to F.C. James, 21 September 1943 RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>285</sup> There is no correspondence with LaViolette in any of the Principal's files on Japanese Canadian admissions prior to the passing of the policy, nor does James refer to him in his diaries.

LaViolette as an “expert on [the] Japanese Problem” when he arrived at McGill in 1940.<sup>286</sup>

Described by historian Greg Robinson as a believer in “assimilation at all costs,” LaViolette served as an administrator at the Heart Mountain Japanese American internment camp between May and December 1943, and would go on to publish the definitive contemporary academic text on Japanese Canadian internment, *The Canadian Japanese and World War II: A Sociological and Psychological Account*.<sup>287</sup>

LaViolette had more insider knowledge of the federal policies targeting Japanese Canadians than anyone else at McGill. In the spring and summer of 1942, he was busy corresponding with Nisei contacts on both sides of the border. His protégé Shotaro Frank Miyamoto wrote to him about developments at the University of Washington and the successful transfer of exiled coastal Nisei students to other American universities.<sup>288</sup> In March 1942, one former student wrote to thank him for sending a letter of reference to Yale on her behalf.<sup>289</sup> Another former student described a campus visit to Shuichi Kusaka, a Japanese Canadian physicist then employed at Princeton who would go on to edit Albert Einstein’s official biography.<sup>290</sup> Paul Sakai, a former student serving in the 47th Infantry, frequently wrote to

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<sup>286</sup> “Expert on Japanese Problem Joins Staff at McGill,” *Montreal Star*, 27 September 1940.

<sup>287</sup> Robinson, “Forrest LaViolette,” 31, 36; LaViolette, *The Canadian Japanese and World War II*.

<sup>288</sup> Letter, Frank Miyamoto to Forrest LaViolette, 7 March 1942, Box 1, Folder 1, Forrest E. LaViolette papers, Manuscripts Collection 295, Louisiana Research Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA (HTML).

<sup>289</sup> Letter, ‘Mariko’ to Forrest LaViolette, 12 March 1942, Box 1, Folder 1, Forrest E. LaViolette papers, Manuscripts Collection 295, Louisiana Research Collection, HTML.

<sup>290</sup> Letter, ‘Martha’ to Forrest and Vera LaViolette, 26 June 1942, Box 1, Folder 2, Forrest E. LaViolette papers, Manuscripts Collection 295, Louisiana Research Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA; Phillip Frank, *Einstein: His Life and Times* (New York: Knopf, 1953).

LaViolette to report on life in the American army.<sup>291</sup> In Canada, LaViolette corresponded with Dalhousie law school graduate, George Tamaki, who provided him with a list of the seventeen Japanese Canadians serving in the army as of May 1942, most of whom had enlisted east of British Columbia.<sup>292</sup>

LaViolette's presence at McGill may have encouraged his acquaintances to apply there. Canadian Nisei Kunio Hidaka, then employed at a steel mill in London, Ontario, asked LaViolette about opportunities at McGill.<sup>293</sup> Noby Inamoto, a Canadian Engineering student at the University of Washington who had been confined to the Puyallup internment camp, had applied to McGill on 29 May. Matthews responded to Inamoto on 15 June 1942, promising to inform him of the Admissions Committee's decision regarding his application.<sup>294</sup>

### **The First Policy**

For over a year, Matthews could offer no news to the majority of Japanese Canadian applicants to McGill. Frustrated by the Principal's refusal to give him a clear answer, he urged James to take ownership of university policy and bring the issue to the senate, writing in September 1943 that,

The applications came to me weeks, even months, ago and I think we are behaving badly in not answering their straightforward question 'Can I enter McGill University?' in a straightforward way.

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<sup>291</sup> Letter, Cpl. Paul Sakai Forrest LaViolette, 3 July 1942, Box 1, Folder 3, Forrest E. LaViolette papers, Manuscripts Collection 295, Louisiana Research Collection, HTML.

<sup>292</sup> Letter, George Tamaki to Forrest LaViolette, 3 May 1942, Box 1, Folder 2, Forrest E. LaViolette papers, Manuscripts Collection 295, Louisiana Research Collection, HTML. Ito accounts for 28 Japanese Canadians then serving, and four more who enlisted after May 1942. Ito, *We Went to War*, 302.

<sup>293</sup> Letter, Kunio Hidaka to Forrest LaViolette, 29 June 1942, Box 1, Folder 2, Forrest E. LaViolette papers, Manuscripts Collection 295, Louisiana Research Collection, HTML.

<sup>294</sup> Letter, T.H. Matthews to Noby Inamoto, 15 June 1942, Box 1, Folder 2, Forrest E. LaViolette papers, Manuscripts Collection 295, Louisiana Research Collection, HTML.

I would suggest that this is not a faculty matter but a decision that Senate should make. I grant that professional faculties like Medicine and Engineering may have useful comments to make concerning the chances of subsequent employment for Japanese or Jewish or coloured students and concerning any difficulties that may arise during the course, but I do not think that any faculty has the right to exclude students on grounds not connected in any way with the course it offers. If political or racial or religious factors are to enter into the admission of students into any faculty it should I think be a university, i.e. a Senate, responsibility. That was why I suggested last summer that applications for these Canadian-Japanese should be considered by the Senate Committee which was already dealing with applications from interned refugees. Incidentally, the Faculty of Arts and Science has recommended some of these refugees for University scholarships and has awarded faculty scholarships to others; the Faculty of Engineering has just given a Douglas Tutorial Bursary to another, and none of our buildings have so far been blown up.<sup>295</sup>

On 29 September, the Faculty of Arts and Science debated the admission of Japanese Canadian students at a faculty meeting. The assembled members were divided. They passed a resolution, carried by a majority of one, "That academically qualified Japanese students of Canadian birth who have not been out of school for more than one year be admitted for one year only to courses in the Humanities and Social Science groups."

Unsatisfied with the already restrictive policy, the Faculty's Committee on Admissions rescinded the resolution with a vote of 4 to 2. Chemistry Professor William Hatcher proposed, and Mathematics Professor Herbert Tate seconded, that the Committee's decision be sustained. That resolution lost by one vote. The Chairman of the History Department, Professor Edward Adair proposed, and Biology Professor N.J. Berrill seconded "that the original resolution passed by the Council should be approved and the action of the Committee on Admissions be overridden." After further debate, members amended the original resolution to include, "That such students be dropped if they fail in the mid-term examinations, as are students subject to

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<sup>295</sup> Memo, T.H. Matthews to F.C. James, 21 September 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

Selective Service regulations.”<sup>296</sup> Hatcher resigned from the Committee on Admissions in protest.<sup>297</sup>

The next day, Dean Macmillan presented his Faculty’s resolution to the Senate, announcing that he intended to vote against it. Principal James highlighted the exclusion of Japanese Canadians from the Armed Forces and work in munitions plants. Dean Macmillan outlined five reasons to exclude Japanese Canadian students:

1. It would be unfair in wartime to allow Canadian students of Japanese ancestry privileges which were not open to students of British ancestry.
2. Returned men would be incensed if they found that these Japanese Canadians had been trained in their absence for the positions they hoped to occupy.
3. These Japanese [Canadians] students, though excluded from the armed forces and from munitions plants, could work at Agriculture and help the war effort in other ways. This they were generally unwilling to do so.
4. Public opinion was against their being admitted and the University by admitting them would lose public support and confidence.
5. The attitude of our present students is problematical. A certain amount of antagonism is anticipated. This, however, is only speculation.<sup>298</sup>

Principal James told the Senate that the Engineering faculty had opposed the admission of Japanese Canadian students in 1942. Physics Professor David Keys echoed Macmillan, arguing that “if students could not contribute to the war effort they should not come to college.” Law Professor Orville Tyndale said that, “he was unwilling to force the members of [the Faculty of Arts and Science] to accept students whom a great number of them clearly did not want.”<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>296</sup> Resolution of the Faculty of Arts and Science on Japanese Students, 29 September 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>297</sup> Letter, C. Leonard Huskins to W.H. Hatcher, 30 September 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>298</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 30 September 1943, Senate Minute Book, 1943 to 1945, RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA.

<sup>299</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 30 September 1943, Senate Minute Book, 1943 to 1945, RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA.

Department of Classics Chairman William Woodhead led the campaign for inclusion of Japanese Canadian students, arguing that, “these students were Canadian citizens charged with no crime other than being born of Japanese ancestry which they could not help, and [...] they should be treated with humanity and decency.” Dean of Law Charles LeMesurier added that “these students were likely to be better Canadians if they were decently treated.”<sup>300</sup>

Chairman of Physiology, Professor Hebbel Hoff, framed his support for Japanese Canadians cautiously, stating that, “he would certainly not recommend the acceptance of any students if they impeded the war effort of the University but [...] no men or women should be excluded on the grounds of race or colour.” Hoff suggested that, “as an additional guarantee the University should admit these students only providing the RCMP was willing to state that to the best of their knowledge each candidate was a suitable person to enter the University.” Hoff’s amendment was accepted. An unnamed individual introduced another amendment, “excluding these students from other parts of the Faculty of Arts and Science and from all other faculties of the University other than the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research.”<sup>301</sup> The Resolution was put to a vote and narrowly passed by a margin of 11 to 10.

D.L. Thomson, the Dean of Graduate Studies, asked if the policy would apply to medical students George Shimotakahara and Satoru Watanabe, and was told that “any regulations adopted would not be retroactive unless the Senate specifically so decided.” He further explained that, “the Canadian Government was anxious to send him a Canadian student of Japanese extraction to do research work in Pharmacology and wished to know the Senate’s wishes in regard to this

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<sup>300</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 30 September 1943, Senate Minute Book, 1943 to 1945, RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA.

<sup>301</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 30 September 1943, Senate Minute Book, 1943 to 1945, RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA.

problem and similar problems that might arise.” Meeting minutes indicate a further resolution in light of Thomson’s request: “Resolved that Canadian students of Japanese extraction might be admitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research on the recommendation of the Committee on Research.” The minutes do not indicate whether or not the second resolution was passed. Principal James did not cast a vote at the meeting.<sup>302</sup>

### **Orchestrating the Second Policy**

The Senate had imposed heavy restrictions on “Japanese students of Canadian birth”; they had only been allowed to enroll at McGill for a maximum of one year, confined to the Humanities and Social Sciences, required to provide verification from the RCMP, and banned from most McGill faculties, yet some influential members of the Senate and Board of Governors remained unsatisfied.

Word of the Senate’s resolution soon reached the Board of Governors. Morris Wilson, McGill’s Chancellor, and President of the Royal Bank of Canada, wrote to James that, “the Board of Governors will, I am sure, feel that this is a matter of fundamental university policy which should have been reviewed by the full Board, and it will therefore wish to have an opportunity to consider any recommendation that the Senate may make before putting it into effect.”<sup>303</sup> The Senate’s resolution was raised at a meeting of the Board of Governors on 13 October. James stated that, “at the meeting of Senate next week that body will reconsider the whole problem and in view of the amendment to its rules of procedure I am inclined to think that

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<sup>302</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 30 September 1943; Letter, F.C. James to A.B. Wood, 18 October 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>303</sup> F.C. James, “Summary from Governors,” 13 October 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.



the existing resolution will be repealed and some new resolution, probably reasonably stringent in its terms, is likely to be adopted.”<sup>304</sup>

After the Board of Governors meeting, Arthur Wood, President of Sun Life and member of both McGill’s Senate and Board of Governors, wrote the first of many furious letters to James regarding the admission of Japanese Canadian students. Wood sat on multiple influential Board of Governors’ committees, including the Executive and Finance Committee, the Investment Committee, and the Financial Exploration Committee.<sup>305</sup> He had missed the Senate meeting at which the policy had been passed. After a brief sermon on the authority of the Board of Governors over the Senate, Wood warned James of the specter of angry donors:

Having in mind that we are contemplating an appeal to the large corporations and friends of the University for funds to meet McGill’s essential needs, I wonder if any consideration was given to the possible effect of the Senate’s action in this matter on the attitude of some of those who are to be approached for contributions. It is quite possible that some who would willingly help the University might object strongly to supplying funds which, even to a limited extent, might be used for the education of Japanese students.<sup>306</sup>

James assured Wood that he personally opposed the resolution, adding that, “the actual wording of the resolution [...] is such that few, if any, Japanese students will qualify for admission to the University.”<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>304</sup> F.C. James, “Summary from Governors,” 13 October 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>305</sup> Minutes of the McGill Board of Governors’ meeting, 13 October 1943, RG 4, McGill University Governors Minutes, 22 August 1935 to 13 December 1944, MUA.

<sup>306</sup> Letter, A.B. Wood to F.C. James, 15 October 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>307</sup> Letter, F.C. James to A.B. Wood, 18 October 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

At James's request, Matthews verified that no Japanese Canadians had been admitted as of 19 October, though he had three applications pending RCMP consultation. He revealed that he had admitted Ryo Otsuki for the fall term.

The Senate met again on 20 October. Wood demanded the total exclusion of Japanese Canadians on racial grounds, insisting that "every Canadian of Japanese ancestry was under suspicion [and] by action of Dominion Government they had been deprived of some of their full rights of Canadian citizenship."<sup>308</sup> He echoed Macmillan and James's points about the exclusion of Japanese Canadians from the Armed Forces and munitions plants.

Wood added that, "the University was dependent for its progress upon public support [and] a number of the wealthy citizens whom the [Board of Governors fundraising] committee hoped to canvass might well refuse to contribute any money toward the education of Japanese men and women."<sup>309</sup> Finally, he reported that on a recent business trip to the United States, he got the impression that public opinion disfavored Japanese Americans.

In the subsequent discussion, proponents of racial exclusion, including Wood, Dean Macmillan, and Principal James, raised the following arguments:

It is unfair to allow Canadian born students of Japanese ancestry privileges which are not open to students of British ancestry; Returned men would be incensed if they found that these Japanese Canadians had been trained in their absence for the positions they hoped to occupy; These Japanese students could work on Agriculture and help the war effort in other ways; they were generally unwilling to do this; Public opinion was against their being admitted and the University would [lose] public support and confidence by so doing; The only justification for the University's activities at the present time was its contribution to the war effort and IF STUDENTS COULD NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE WAR EFFORT

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<sup>308</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 20 October 1943, Senate Minute Book 1943 to 1945 RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA.

<sup>309</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 20 October 1943, Senate Minute Book 1943 to 1945 RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA.

THEY SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO COME TO COLLEGE.<sup>310</sup>

Professor Woodhead again “made a plea for a liberal spirit in dealing with these students and pointed out that the argument that the motion adopted at the last meeting had been carried only by a small majority would apply equally well if it should be reversed by a small majority.”

<sup>311</sup> Dean of Agriculture W.H. Brittain pointed out that Japanese Americans were enrolled in 240 American colleges, while 8000 Nisei men were serving in the American military and regularly flying over Germany.<sup>312</sup> Medicine Professor Everitt Murray countered that “we were fighting for our very existence against an unscrupulous enemy and *these were not real Canadians* and some were unwilling to trust them.”<sup>313</sup>

When it was announced, probably by Matthews, that Mr. Trueman had visited the Principal to encourage the admission of seven Japanese Canadian students, Dean Macmillan dismissed him as an employee of the YMCA, not the federal government.<sup>314</sup> Asked about other Canadian universities’ attitude toward Japanese Canadian enrollment, James, who had not consulted other universities, indicated that “he thought the University of Toronto and Queen’s were willing to accept Canadian-Japanese students and that Manitoba and Alberta excluded them.”<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> James’s Summary of McGill Senate Meeting, 20 October 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA. Emphasis in original.

<sup>311</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 20 October 1943, Senate Minute Book 1943 to 1945 RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA.

<sup>312</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 20 October 1943, Senate Minute Book 1943 to 1945 RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA.

<sup>313</sup> James’s Summary of McGill Senate Meeting, 20 October 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA. Emphasis added.

<sup>314</sup> Memo, T.H. Matthews to F.C. James, 21 October 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>315</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 20 October 1943, Senate Minute Book 1943 to 1945 RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA.

Dean Macmillan moved and Dean O'Neill seconded the resolution,

That the resolution on the admission of students *of Japanese racial origin* to certain courses in the Faculty of Arts and Science, passed at the last meeting of the Senate by a majority of one, be expunged from the minutes and the following be inserted: Having regard to the great shortage of man power and woman power in Canada resulting from the demands of the Armed Services and war industries, the Senate is of the opinion that students *of Japanese racial origin* who desire to attend classes in the Faculty of Arts and Science should defer their academic courses for the duration of the war.<sup>316</sup>

Professor Tyndale proposed a briefer wording, "In the opinion of Senate it is inadvisable to admit any *students of Japanese racial origin* to the undergraduate courses of the University during the present war." The resolution was adopted by a vote of 11 to 9.<sup>317</sup> The Senate traditionally provided newspapers with a mimeographed summary of proceedings after each meeting. Following the meeting on 20 October 1943, however, the resolution barring Japanese Canadians on racial grounds was omitted from all such communications.<sup>318</sup> McGill officials evidently hoped to keep the policy a secret, much like their unofficial efforts to reduce Jewish enrollment.<sup>319</sup>

## Dissent

Though the advocates of racial exclusion had succeeded in passing an official Senate policy, their methods alienated many staff, Faculty, and Senate members. Matthews wrote to James the next day to inform him that, contrary to Dean Macmillan's claims, Trueman was a

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<sup>316</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 20 October 1943, Senate Minute Book 1943 to 1945 RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA. Emphasis added.

<sup>317</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 20 October 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA. Emphasis added.

<sup>318</sup> "Montreal: McGill University Bars Niseis, Manitoba Enrollment Doubled," *New Canadian*, 28 October 1944.

<sup>319</sup> Robinson, *A History of Antisemitism in Canada*, 73; Anctil, 159.

placement officer for the British Columbia Security Commission, employed by the Department of Labour.<sup>320</sup> James told Macmillan, “in the light of these facts I suppose that he is definitely a government official, although I confess that I do not like him anymore on that account.”<sup>321</sup>

Professor Woodhead wrote to James on 24 October that “what happened in the last meeting of Senate still fills me with amazement.”<sup>322</sup> He pointed out that there had been no motion to reconsider the resolution at the meeting of 30 September and no mention of the issue on the agenda. As a result, senate members Charles Colby, Hebbel Hoff, and the Honourable Adrian Knatchbull Hugessen, all opponents of wholesale racial exclusion, had been absent from the meeting.<sup>323</sup> Woodhead continued, “The question was reopened apparently because a governor had been absent from the previous meeting. But surely, if this ground is admitted, any of the three gentlemen already mentioned might now, if they wished, insist upon a further reopening, and the process might be repeated ad infinitum.” Finally, he highlighted Macmillan’s ‘misstatement’ regarding Trueman’s status as a government official. In the margins of Woodhead’s letter, the principal’s secretary, Dorothy McMurray, blamed the registrar for stirring up opposition, scrawling “this is [Matthews], bring up again next Senate and get a clearer majority.”<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>320</sup> Memo, T.H. Matthews to F.C. James, 21 October 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>321</sup> Letter, F.C. James to Cyrus Macmillan, 23 October 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>322</sup> Letter, W.D. Woodhead to F.C. James, 24 October 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>323</sup> After an unsuccessful bid as the Liberal candidate for the riding of St.-Lawrence-St. George in the 1935 federal election, Hugessen was appointed to the Senate in 1937, and served as president of the federal Liberal party from 1940-1943.

<sup>324</sup> Letter, W.D. Woodhead to F.C. James, 24 October 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

James, who had discussed revision of the original Senate resolution with the Board of Governors, the Chancellor, and Arthur Wood well before the second meeting, lied to Professor Woodhead, asserting in his reply that, “No reference to Japanese students was made on the original agenda because the matter did not come to my attention or to that of the Secretary until shortly before the Senate meeting and, even if this phrase had been put on the revised agenda it could not have reached the members of Senate whom you mention.”<sup>325</sup>

Woodhead reminded the Principal that the proceedings of the Senate meeting on 20 October defied the rules of parliamentary procedure;

A motion for reconsideration of a previous resolution can be made, ‘only by one who voted with the prevailing side, and on the day or the day after the vote which it is proposed to reconsider was taken.’ A motion to rescind or repeal normally requires notice of motion at a previous meeting; or ‘any action may be rescinded without notice by a two-thirds vote or by a vote of the majority of the entire membership.’<sup>326</sup>

James feigned ignorance, claiming, “It would, I think, be all to the good if there were some clearly accepted rules of procedure although I must confess that I did not know that Senate had already accepted a specific set of rules.”<sup>327</sup>

Woodhead chose not to demand a new meeting regarding the issue, explaining that,

I did not want to see the question revived, because I feel as you do that the margin was dangerously narrow, and I do not like to think how students of Japanese origin might be treated by some of my colleagues, if they come to McGill. I was disappointed that what I considered an illiberal attitude was adopted by so many members of the staff, especially as I believe that the student body itself would prove far more liberal.<sup>328</sup>

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<sup>325</sup> Letter, F.C. James to W.D. Woodhead, 26 October 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>326</sup> Letter, W.D. Woodhead to F.C. James, 31 October 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>327</sup> Letter, F.C. James to W.D. Woodhead, 1 November 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>328</sup> Letter, W.D. Woodhead to F.C. James, 31 October 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

At the next Arts Faculty meeting on 15 November, Woodhead asked to make a report on the procedural irregularities of the 20 October meeting.<sup>329</sup> At the Senate meeting of 17 November, Senator Hugessen expressed his surprise at the new policy, complaining that “to allow questions already settled to be reopened in this manner might lead to a long series of contradictory decisions and would make it impossible for anyone to say that any matter was finally settled.” James claimed that Senate’s actions at the previous meeting were justified by Curtis’s Rules of Order, and sought to appease critics by proposing a special committee, comprised of Tyndale, Macmillan, Hugessen, and Woodhead, to clarify the rules of procedure.<sup>330</sup>

### **Trueman Makes A Final Appeal**

No one contacted Trueman to announce the passing of McGill’s racially exclusive admissions policy. On 26 November, he wrote to James again, fearful that “the matter must have slipped your mind since so far no word has reached me.” Trueman had been in contact with C.V. Hibbard, Director of the National Japanese American Student Relocation Council. Hibbard had confirmed for Trueman that “the whole decision as to admission or rejection is on the basis of the student’s individual character and educational qualifications rather than on his racial affiliation.”

Trueman urged James to follow the American example:

I need scarcely emphasize again our hope that the same attitude toward Canadian Nisei will be shown by our Canadian educational institutions. Since the school year is now so far advanced the problem for the moment is, of course, more or less an academic one. We would, however, be very glad to hear that beginning with the new college year McGill University had expressed itself as willing to admit Canadian Born Japanese boys and girls

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<sup>329</sup> Faculty of Arts Meeting Minutes, 15 November 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>330</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 17 November 1943, Senate Minute Book 1943 to 1945, RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA.

on the basis of their character and academic qualifications.<sup>331</sup>

James forwarded Trueman's letter to Dean Macmillan, who redoubled his efforts to discredit the BCSC placement officer. Macmillan conceded that Trueman was paid by the federal government, but insisted that he "does not represent the Government, nor does he enunciate their policies." Referring to the official position taken by the Department of External Affairs, he reminded James that, "the Government has naturally carefully refrained from any opinion with regard to what educational advantages should be provided for Japanese students or children."<sup>332</sup>

James communicated the Senate's policy to Trueman the following week, citing the justifications offered in the second senate meeting:

Fundamentally this decision of the Senate rests upon two important considerations. In the first place, it was apparent that if Japanese students were admitted to the University they would not be allowed to take military training and so would be in a position of advantage compared to the rest of our student body. We have moreover been informed that they are not eligible for the Armed Services or war industry, so that in the light of the government policy it seems to us appropriate that these Canadian-born Japanese should for the remainder of the war accept useful employment as an indication of their sincere desire to help Canada.<sup>333</sup>

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<sup>331</sup> Letter, G.E. Trueman to F.C. James, 26 November 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>332</sup> Letter, Cyrus Macmillan to F.C. James, 6 December 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>333</sup> Letter, F.C. James to G.E. Trueman, 14 December 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.



## Chapter 4: Publicity, Protest, and Repeal

In this chapter, I describe resistance to McGill's policy from Japanese Canadians, Senate members, the student body, alumni, and the public. I detail the Principal's efforts to justify racial exclusion, silence criticism and outmaneuver the opponents of exclusion at Senate. I explore the impact of protests and media coverage and explain how the policy was finally repealed.

In the months after the McGill Senate officially excluded Japanese Canadian students on racial grounds, the policy's champions carefully prevented their opponents from repealing it. Professor Woodhead's complaints about the irregularities at the meeting of 20 October 1943 helped bring about the formation of the Senate Committee on the Rules of Procedure, but its new rules, presented at the Senate meeting on 19 January 1944, prevented immediate reconsideration of the racist admissions policy. The new rules stipulated that all items be explicitly described on each meeting's agenda and that, "the minimum vote required for the passing of a motion to reconsider [previous resolutions] shall be two-thirds of the members present."<sup>334</sup> Macmillan, Wood, and their allies had passed their policy with eleven votes; Woodhead and his allies would need fourteen votes to reverse it.

Some McGill staff members continued to express their disapproval of the ban behind closed doors. At a meeting of the Faculty of Arts on 28 April 1944, the Secretary read a letter

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<sup>334</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 19 January 1944, Senate Minute Book, 1943 to 1945, RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA.

from junior staff members disputing the Senate's policy before Dean Macmillan ruled the letter out of order.<sup>335</sup>

### **Adverse Publicity**

The policy finally captured media attention on the anniversary of its enactment. Reverend Canon Percival S.C. Powles, a McGill graduate (Arts 1910), former bishop in the Anglican Church of Japan, and activist for Japanese Canadian civil rights, raised the issue at a meeting of the Council for Social Services of the Church of England, in joint session with the Boards of General Synod at Macdonald College.<sup>336</sup> On 22 September, the *Montreal Gazette* reported that Powles had revealed that, "some institutions of learning had been closed to Japanese [Canadian] students who had attempted to enroll."<sup>337</sup>

Without naming McGill as its target, the Council passed a resolution,

Believing that racial discrimination as such is contrary to the principles of Our Lord, this Council deprecates the evidence of such discrimination in our midst growing in number and intensity and expresses the hope that institutions of learning which share with the church great traditions of freedom continue to open their doors to the public of all races.<sup>338</sup>

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<sup>335</sup> Faculty of Arts meeting Minutes, 28 April 1944, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>336</sup> Reverend Canon Powles's children, Bill, Cyril, Joy, Kathleen, and Isabel, all attended McGill in the 1940s and participated in the Student Christian Movement, where they crossed paths with Japanese Canadian students including Betty Kobayashi and Kiyokazu Jack Momose. Cyril's wife Marjorie Powles (née Watson), who served as secretary for the Student Christian Movement in 1945, recalls of the Nisei students, "They just couldn't be ordinary. That must have been true about [Momose] What I remember is people not really wanting to talk about it [...] most people just wanted to not be noticed." Interview with Bill Powles, 17 May 1987, MG 4247, Container 33, Box 25, File 15; Interview with Cyril Powles and Marjorie conducted by Sandra Kawaii and Melissa Steele, December 1986, MG 4247, Container 33, Box 25, File 16; Interview with Joy Powles Smith conducted by Sandra Kawai and Melissa Steele, 15 January, 1987, Container 33, Box 25, File 33; Interview with Cyril Powles and Marjorie conducted by Sandra Kawaii and Melissa Steele, December 1986, MG 4247, Container 33, Box 25, File 16, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal Fonds, MUA.

<sup>337</sup> "Kootenay Bishop Urges Jap Rights," *Gazette*, 22 September 1944.

<sup>338</sup> "Kootenay Bishop Urges Jap Rights," *Gazette*, 22 September 1944.

Powles and his peers continued their campaign against the policy. On 19 October, the Montreal Diocesan Theological College Alumni Association passed a resolution against McGill's ban and sent out a press release. Principal James was finally compelled to answer to the public, though he gave as little information as possible. The Canadian Press reported the following day, "The bar on Japanese [Canadian] students at McGill University - ordered by the university's senate- is in line with the ban against their admission in the armed forces or in war factories, it was said today."<sup>339</sup> Newspapers across the country carried the story.<sup>340</sup>

The first reaction from McGill's student body arrived via the campus newspaper, the *McGill Daily*. In a letter to the editor, first year Science student Basil Rattray wrote on 24 October 1944, "I was deeply shocked recently to learn that the University Senate had barred Canadian students of Japanese descent from admission to McGill." Dismissing the excuses offered about war research on campus and the ban on Nisei military enlistment, he argued that "one mistaken and semi-Fascist regulation cannot be justified by pointing to another one, equally mistaken and fantastic." Rattray suggested that the government could easily conduct background checks on the few Japanese Canadian applicants to McGill and admit those who passed. He also pointed to the large number of Japanese Americans fighting in the American Armed Forces.<sup>341</sup>

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<sup>339</sup> "McGill Bars Jap Students," *Vancouver Sun*, 20 October 1944.

<sup>340</sup> "Explain Ban on Japs," *Ottawa Journal*, 20 October 1944; "McGill Bars Jap Students," *The Province*, 20 October 1944; "Ban Jap Students," *Lethbridge Herald*, 21 October 1944; "McGill Jap Ban Policy Explained," *Windsor Star*, 21 October 1944; "News in Brief," *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, 21 October 1944; "Jap Student Ban," *Leader-Post*, 21 October 1944. Greg Robinson notes that the francophone press ignored McGill's exclusion policy. Greg Robinson, *Un drame de la Deuxième Guerre: Le sort de la minorité japonaise aux États-Unis et au Canada* (Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2012): 292.

<sup>341</sup> Basil Rattray, "Letter to the Editor," *McGill Daily*, 24 October 1944. Rattray would eventually teach Mathematics at McGill.

The *McGill Daily* editorial staff initially refrained from offering their own commentary on the policy, telling another letter writer on 26 October that, “no statement of any kind is being issued on the subject by the Principal.”<sup>342</sup> The *Varsity*, the University of Toronto’s student newspaper, issued the first editorial from the student press, titled ‘Bigotry at McGill,’ on 27 October 1944. The editors debunked the Senate’s claims about war research:

The [justification for the policy], that much war research is being done at McGill, seems strange in view of the fact that the war research being done at McGill is not much, if at all, in excess of that being done right here at Toronto; yet Japanese-Canadian students of proven quality and sufficient academic qualifications are allowed to study here. On top of this, the average university student has no more access to the secret war research being done at a university than any outsider, for obvious security reasons.<sup>343</sup>

On 28 October, the national English-language Japanese Canadian newspaper, the *New Canadian*, condemned the policy and reported that eighteen Nisei were then enrolled at the University of Manitoba, in eight different faculties.<sup>344</sup>

The editor-in-chief of the *McGill Daily*, Medical student Helmut Richter, visited the Principal on 31 October to express his wish to cover the policy in the student newspaper. James discouraged him from “[washing] our dirty linen in public through the press,” and advised that Richter urge the Students Executive Council to *quietly* forward a petition to the Senate.<sup>345</sup>

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<sup>342</sup> Maurice Lafrance, “Letter to the Editor,” *McGill Daily*, 26 October 1944.

<sup>343</sup> “Bigotry at McGill,” *Varsity*, 27 October 1944.

<sup>344</sup> “Montreal: McGill University Bars Niseis, Manitoba Enrollment Doubled,” *New Canadian*, 28 October 1944.

<sup>345</sup> Diary of Frank Cyril James, 31 October 1944, MG 1017, Container 49, Frank Cyril James Fonds, MUA.

## The Students' Executive Council Responds

On 1 November, the Students' Executive Council (SEC) passed a motion to submit to the Principal for the Senate's consideration that, "the present blanket measure barring otherwise eligible Canadian-born Japanese students from enrollment at McGill University' [is] an 'unjust criterion of admission to this University.'"<sup>346</sup> Much to the principal's dismay, the *McGill Daily* mentioned the motion alongside other items on the SEC agenda. James rebuked SEC President John Costigan the next day, writing that, "I hope that in future recommendations of this kind will be sent directly to me before they are released for publication. To the best of my knowledge this has always been our traditional practice at the University, since it simplifies administration and promotes a harmonious relationship."<sup>347</sup>

James was further offended when the official communication arrived, describing the Council's "strong disapproval" of the Senate policy.<sup>348</sup> He wrote to Costigan, "I feel [...] that the wording of this resolution should certainly be changed, since it is scarcely appropriate for the Students' Executive Council to express its 'strong disapproval' of regulations adopted by the Senate for the admission of students to the University."<sup>349</sup> James called Costigan and SEC

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<sup>346</sup> "Students' Council Announces Amalgamated Charities Drive To Begin Nov. 20 for One Week," *McGill Daily*, 2 November 1944.

<sup>347</sup> Letter, F.C. James to John Costigan, 2 November 1944, RG 2, Container 82, File 1692, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>348</sup> Letter, G.H. Fletcher to F.C. James, 2 November 1944, RG 2, Container 82, File 1692, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>349</sup> Letter, F.C. James to John Costigan, 3 November 1944, RG 2, Container 82, File 1692, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

Secretary-Treasurer G.H. Fletcher to his office the next day; both men blamed Richter for the publicity. They agreed Richter should apologize to the Council and the Senate.<sup>350</sup>

Despite James's efforts to control the reaction of the Students' Executive Council and the *Daily*, the policy continued to attract attention off campus. On 2 November 1944, M.J. Coldwell, leader of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation party, addressed a group of teachers at Montreal High School about education policy. An audience member asked him to comment on McGill's policies toward Japanese Canadian and Jewish applicants. Coldwell condemned discriminatory practices, declaring that any institution that would ban Japanese Canadians or impose differential admission standards for Jews "forfeits its right to be called a university."<sup>351</sup> James refused to comment on Coldwell's statements to both the *Gazette* and the *Globe and Mail*. The *Montreal Star*, owned by McGill governor J.W. McConnell, carefully omitted any mention of Coldwell's comments about the university from its coverage of his visit.<sup>352</sup>

Public disapproval did not prevent McGill's Board of Governors from expanding the racially exclusive policy to affect staff as well as students. At a meeting on 8 November, the governors contended with an attempt by the Dean of Law, Charles LeMesurier, to hire an unnamed Japanese Canadian woman as his secretary, on the grounds that the policy did not technically apply to employees. The matter was referred to the Executive and Financial Committee and the minutes reported that, "a lengthy discussion [...] took place on the subject and

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<sup>350</sup> Diary of Frank Cyril James, 3 November 1944, MG 1017, Container 47, Frank Cyril James Fonds, MUA.

<sup>351</sup> "Scolds M'Gill For Refusing Jap Students," *Globe and Mail*, 2 November 1944; "Race Restrictions at University Hit," *Gazette*, 2 November 1944. The Principal's office preserved a copy of the *Gazette* article in a file titled "Admissions: Students." RG 2, Container 687, File 1694, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>352</sup> "Coldwell Says Troops Must Be Reinforced," *Montreal Star*, 2 November 1944.

it was decided that Canadian born Japanese should not be employed so long as students of this nationality were excluded from the University.”<sup>353</sup> James reported in his diary that “the only excitement was the violent protest by Senator Hugessen.”<sup>354</sup>

### **A Japanese Canadian Alumna Speaks Out**

Student clubs began to mobilize against the policy. On 9 November, the Student Labor Club invited “well-known [Japanese Canadian] anti-fascist”, McGill alumna, Betty Kobayashi (Arts 1940, Social Work 1942), to speak at the Union Grill. The *Daily* reported that,

Miss Kobayashi expressed her conviction that only fighting for tolerance among all the peoples of Canada will vanquish intolerance and make possible the achievement of the common aims of all Canadians. Loyalty, she said, ‘does not depend on the colour of a person’s skin or the shape of the eyes,’ and she quoted from documents received from young Japanese Canadians in various parts of Canada expressing their desire and determination to fight in every way possible against fascism in every country.<sup>355</sup>

Betty’s sister, Mary Campbell Kobayashi Hecht, was then studying Public Health Nursing at McGill. Cruel and arbitrary federal measures against Japanese Canadians had significantly impacted their family. Their father, Shinsuke Harry Kobayashi, president and manager of the Montreal branch of the Mikado Company, an import firm, had been on a business trip in Japan on 7 December 1941. Betty had told the *Gazette* that evening, “We were hoping he would be home for Christmas, he may be on a boat that left Japan on December 2, or he may still

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<sup>353</sup> McGill Board of Governors Meeting Minutes, 8 November 1944, RG 4, McGill University Governors Minutes, 22 August 1935 to 13 December 1944, MUA. Emphasis added.

<sup>354</sup> Diary of Frank Cyril James, 8 November 1944, MG 1017, Container 49, Frank Cyril James Fonds, MUA.

<sup>355</sup> “Miss Kobayashi Addresses SLC In Union Grill,” *McGill Daily*, 10 November 1944.

be in Japan.”<sup>356</sup> Shinsuke Harry, a Canadian First World War veteran, would not be able to return until the end of the war.

Like all property and assets owned by Japanese Canadians, the Mikado Company was seized by the Custodian of Enemy Property (CEP). The CEP released a small monthly income to Harry Shinsuke’s Scottish-Canadian wife, Mary Jamieson Kobayashi. The CEP garnished fees for managing and selling the company, leaving Kobayashi with a fraction of his assets.<sup>357</sup> Betty and Mary were forced to report to the RCMP to be fingerprinted “like we were criminals.”<sup>358</sup> The sisters had to report back on a monthly basis and request permission to leave Montreal.<sup>359</sup> Betty remembers eventually getting “a notice from the RCMP that I was no longer considered to be an Asiatic, that I was a Eurasian. Because my mother was Scottish, I didn’t have to report to them anymore.”<sup>360</sup>

Betty Kobayashi was the only Japanese Canadian who publicly protested McGill’s policy on campus. As a recent graduate, she was acquainted with members of the student body and, unlike her sister and the other Nisei students then still pursuing their degrees, safe from potential expulsion. Mary Campbell Kobayashi Hecht, a veteran of the CCF Youth movement in her own

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<sup>356</sup> “Family of H.S. Kobayashi Here Fears He May Still Be in Tokyo,” *Montreal Gazette*, 8 December 1941.

<sup>357</sup> Betty Kobayashi, *Application for Japanese Canadian Redress*, 20 December 1988, MG 4247, Box 31, File 56, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal Fonds, MUA.

<sup>358</sup> Interview with Betty Kobayashi Issenman conducted by Melissa Steele, 3 November 1986, MG 4247, Box 31, File 56, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal Fonds, MUA.

<sup>359</sup> Betty Kobayashi, *Application for Japanese Canadian Redress*, 20 December 1988, MG 4247, Box 31, File 56, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal Fonds, MUA.

<sup>360</sup> Interview with Betty Kobayashi Issenman conducted by Melissa Steele, 3 November 1986, MG 4247, Box 31, File 56, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal Fonds, MUA.



right and Class President in her nursing program for 1944-1945, likely worried about the consequences of openly criticizing McGill.<sup>361</sup>

Betty Kobayashi applied to serve the Canadian army as a social worker, but she was refused.<sup>362</sup> Though Mary Campbell Kobayashi Hecht managed to graduate from McGill, she was fired from her position as an industrial nurse at the Montreal Canadian Vickers plant.<sup>363</sup> Their brother, Gordon Kobayashi, had managed to enlist in the Royal Canadian Air Force after informing the recruiting officer that his father was a First World War veteran. He was sent to work in an intelligence unit in Vancouver and Victoria, where his unit copied down messages intercepted from the Japanese fleet.<sup>364</sup>

### **Students Protest**

A committee including representatives from the Newman Club, Student Christian Movement, Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship of Canada, Hillel Foundation, Cosmopolitan Club, British West Indies Society, and Student Affairs Club circulated a petition calling for a meeting of the Students' Society to further discuss the issue on 14 November, the first such meeting held in over a year.<sup>365</sup> In its announcement of the meeting, the *Daily* noted that the newly formed

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<sup>361</sup> "Speaks on Capitalism," *Gazette*, 3 November 1936; "C.C.F. Leader Here," *Gazette*, 14 February 1938; Yearbook entry, 1945, Mary Campbell Hecht née Kobayashi, [http://yearbooks.mcgill.ca/viewbook.php?&campus=downtown&book\\_id=1945#page/117/mode/1up](http://yearbooks.mcgill.ca/viewbook.php?&campus=downtown&book_id=1945#page/117/mode/1up).

<sup>362</sup> Interview with Betty Kobayashi Issenman conducted by Melissa Steele, 3 November 1986, MG 4247, Box 31, File 56, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal Fonds, MUA.

<sup>363</sup> Letter from Betty Kobayashi Issenman to Harold Fehr, 23 July 1999, MG 4247, Box 31, File 56, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal Fonds, MUA.

<sup>364</sup> Ikuye Uchida and John Endo Greenaway, "Gordon Kobayashi: A Serene Hapa," *Montreal Bulletin* (March 2001): 7, MG 4247, Container 31, Box 6, File 74, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal, MUA.

<sup>365</sup> Peter R.C.V. Hall, "Students To Consider Reasons For Exclusion of Canadian Japanese," *McGill Daily*, 13 November 1944; "Student Opinion," *McGill Daily*, 14 November 1944.

McGill Veterans' Society had "gone on record as being in favor of the admission of eligible Japanese Canadians."<sup>366</sup> The President of the Cosmopolitan Club, Peter Hall, wrote an article in the *Daily* urging undergraduate students to attend the meeting. James complained about Hall to the Assistant Dean of Arts and Sciences, William Hatcher, describing him as "somewhat of an agitator on campus."<sup>367</sup>

The *Daily* editors supported the Students' Society meeting, arguing that,

It was fairly obvious that the measure does not rest on a firm foundation, inasmuch as the University authorities have refused to make any statement whatsoever about it. If there had been a solid qualifying factor behind the decision, or a good reason for it, there would clearly have been no hesitation in briefly explaining it and thus settling the unfavorable discussion.<sup>368</sup>

They wrote that, "the condemnation of the measure [is] based on a sincere loyalty to our University, a loyalty which hates the thought of an undemocratic blot on our escutcheon."<sup>369</sup>

Perhaps predicting more admonishment from the Principal over the tone of future resolutions, the *Daily* editors nonetheless cautioned the students that, "for student opinion to mean anything and to carry any weight whatsoever, [it] must be maturely arrived at and maturely expressed. To put all the unbounded fire of one's indignation into a highly-charged paragraph bordering on an ultimatum is to vitiate any practical effect which such a resolution may have."<sup>370</sup>

Two hundred and fifty students attended the Students' Society meeting on 14 November 1944. Former Student Christian Movement activist Joy Powles, (Arts '45), recalls that a small number of "hysterical" British Columbian students defended the racist admissions policy at the

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<sup>366</sup> "Students Society Meets in Union Today," *McGill Daily*, 14 November 1944.

<sup>367</sup> Diary of Frank Cyril James, 13 November 1944, MG 1017, Container 47, Frank Cyril James Fonds, MUA.

<sup>368</sup> "Student Opinion," *McGill Daily*, 14 November 1944.

<sup>369</sup> Ibid.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid.

meeting, but they were outnumbered by “Canadians who were simply good civil libertarians.”<sup>371</sup>

The assembled students passed a motion in support of the previous Students’ Executive Council resolution, highlighted the acceptance of Japanese Canadians at other universities and announced that they had been admitted to the Armed Forces.

After raising the issue of “the Jewish quota” in a broader discussion of discrimination at McGill, the students passed an ambitious second motion,

that whereas we, the students of McGill University, are opposed to all forms of racial discrimination; and whereas racial discrimination has been used in the past; that a committee be set up to watch and study such possible discrimination and that if such discrimination is found it shall be brought to the attention of the Student’s Executive Council, who shall call a meeting to attempt to rectify such discrimination.<sup>372</sup>

The assembled students failed to live up to the *Daily* editors’ expectations. In an editorial published the following day, titled ‘The Vigilantes,’ the *Daily* condemned the Students’ Society for passing the second motion. The editors ridiculed the idea of a student committee monitoring the Senate or student clubs, asserting that they had overstepped their bounds like “an old-time vigilante committee.”<sup>373</sup>

McGill governor J.W. McConnell’s newspaper, the *Montreal Star*, previously silent about the university’s racial exclusion policy, finally deigned to mention it, reporting that the alleged vigilantes against racism “were ridiculed today by their own campus paper.”<sup>374</sup> The *Daily*’s editorial had evidently been shared with the *Star* in advance; both were published on the same day. The *Gazette* and other daily newspapers across Canada reported less scornfully on the

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<sup>371</sup> Interview with Joy Powles Smith conducted by Sandra Kawai and Melissa Steele, 15 January 1987, MG 4247, Container 33, Box 25, File 35, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal, MUA.

<sup>372</sup> “Students’ Society Supports Council,” *McGill Daily*, 15 November 1944; “Banning Canadian-born Japanese From McGill Protested by Students,” *Gazette*, 15 November 1944.

<sup>373</sup> “The Vigilantes,” *McGill Daily*, 15 November 1944.

<sup>374</sup> “Student Paper Scores Jap Bar,” *Montreal Star*, 15 November 1944.

meeting's resolution, and much of the national student press was sympathetic. The *McMaster Silhouette* praised the Students' Society with an editorial titled "Good Work, McGill."<sup>375</sup>

John Costigan, President of the Students' Society, carefully distanced himself from the vocal opponents of racial exclusion. He issued a press release on 16 November professing that his stand on the policy was 'absolutely neutral.' Costigan clarified that that the opinions presented at the meeting had been "expressed in his capacity as chairman of the meeting and were not his personal views."<sup>376</sup>

Medical student Harold Ames charged an "obstructionist" Costigan with "[endeavouring] on several excuses to prevent the expression of majority student opinion."<sup>377</sup> In a public letter to the SEC President, Ames questioned the delay of the presentation of the Students' Society resolution to the Senate, declaring that, "one cannot but conclude that the matter is being 'soft pedaled' until student interest lags, and then perhaps dropped completely."<sup>378</sup>

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<sup>375</sup> "McGill Students Would Enroll Canadian-born Japs," *The Province*, 15 November 1944; "Students Oppose Discrimination," *The Windsor Star*, 15 November 1944; "Students Oppose Bar Against Japs," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 15 November 1944; "Picked Up in Passing," *Lethbridge Herald*, 15 November 1944; "McGill would Admit Nisei Students," *The Ubysey*, 16 November 1944; "McGill Men Ask Remove Jap Ban," *Queen's Journal*, 17 November 1944; "The Students' View Point," *Varsity*, 22 November 1944; "Racial Question Rouses McGill," *The Manitoban*, 1 December 1944; "Good Work, McGill," *McGill Daily*, 8 December 1944, (reprinted from the *McMaster Silhouette*). Note that I was unable to thoroughly search the *McMaster Silhouette* archives because they have yet to be digitized.

<sup>376</sup> "Stand on Japs 'Neutral'," *Gazette*, 17 November 1944.

<sup>377</sup> Harold Ames, "Letter to the editor," *McGill Daily*, 20 November 1944.

<sup>378</sup> Harold Ames, "Letter to John Costigan," *McGill Daily*, 20 November 1944.

## The Senate Debate Resumes

On 15 November 1944, the Senate met for the first time since its racial exclusion policy had been publicized. James gave his own summary of the events leading up to 20 October 1943, before reading the petition and letter from the Students' Society. He additionally read the resolution of the Montreal Diocesan Theological College Association and a letter from Dr. C.P. Martin on behalf of the Staff Christian Association, expressing regret for the policy. He then read regulations from the National Defence Headquarters banning "Japanese, naturalized, alien, or Canadian born" from enlistment, "*except where required for special employment as interpreters.*"<sup>379</sup> James remarked passively in his diary that, "under [the new] rules of procedure we could do nothing but hear a notice of motion - which Professor [Edward] Adair promptly gave."<sup>380</sup>

Following the meeting issued a press release in which he declined to comment on the issue and announced that "under the rules of procedure" the Students' Executive Council resolutions would be placed on the agenda for the *next* Senate meeting, conveniently scheduled just before the Christmas holidays. He failed to mention Adair's notice of motion for reconsideration.<sup>381</sup>

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<sup>379</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 15 November 1944, Senate Minute Book, 1943 to 1945, RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA. Emphasis added.

<sup>380</sup> Diary of Frank Cyril James, 15 November 1944, MG 1017, Container 49, Frank Cyril James Fonds, MUA.

<sup>381</sup> Press Release, F.C. James, 15 November 1944, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

Wood demanded that the *Daily* issue a correction regarding the admission of Japanese Canadians into the military, but critics continued to quash that justification.<sup>382</sup> Pointing out that McGill continued to admit students to courses unrelated to defence, the editors of the national magazine *Saturday Night* concluded, “we do not believe that the action of the McGill Senate had anything to do with a desire to reserve the facilities of the university for persons qualifying for the defence plants or the forces.”<sup>383</sup>

### **More Public Condemnation**

Staff at the *New Canadian* continued to follow developments at McGill, issuing an editorial titled “Academic Bigotry” on 18 November 1944. The editors argued that if the sensitivity of war research were truly legitimate grounds for the campus-wide exclusion of all Japanese Canadians, George Shimotakahara and Satoru Watanabe would not have been allowed to remain at McGill after the ban. They asserted that the Nisei medical students’ presence, “coupled with the policy on Jewish students which demands a higher scholastic standing for entry into the student body and the fact that other universities admit Nisei students even though war research work is carried on, clearly points to racial discrimination.”<sup>384</sup>

Letters to the Principal from alumni began to arrive from across the country; all condemned the policy.<sup>385</sup> Vancouver resident Gwen Norman (Arts 1929), wrote on 14 November

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<sup>382</sup> Letter, A.B. Wood to F.C. James, 17 November 1944, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>383</sup> “Keep ‘Em Out!” *Saturday Night*, 18 November 1944.

<sup>384</sup> “Academic Bigotry,” *New Canadian*, 18 November 1944.

<sup>385</sup> Letter, Rev. C.J.L. Bates to F.C. James, 18 November 1944; Letter, Marie Stewart to F.C. James, 18 November 1944; Letter from Esther Ryan to F.C. James, 26 November 1944; Letter, Glen Thomson to F.C. James, 21 January 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

that, “It is distressing to think, while young men of many different racial strains in Canada are fighting for the Four Freedoms, that one of our foremost Canadian Universities should be following the pattern which has made the Universities in Nazi Germany an object of scorn in the eyes of the civilized world.”<sup>386</sup> Flight Lieutenant H. Russell Ross, (M.A. 1932), wrote to James from his Royal Canadian Air Force station in Vulcan, Alberta, to express his shock at McGill’s policy: “I can hardly believe that a democratic institution with such traditions as McGill could possibly be guilty of such narrow racial action.”<sup>387</sup>

In his boilerplate response to the racial exclusion policy’s critics, James wrote,

The matter of admitting students of Japanese ancestry but Canadian birth to this University, in certain faculties, was decided by Senate last year, not on any basis of racial prejudice, as you suggest, but on other considerations entirely. It will again be considered at the December meeting of the Senate. If that body thereafter authorizes a statement for public consumption I shall be glad to write to you and explain its decision.<sup>388</sup>

### **The Senate Reconsiders**

On 12 December, the Board of Governors Executive and Finance Committee discussed the possibility of overriding Senate if they were to repeal the policy, though James advised Wood that to do so would be impolitic, admitting that, “If we felt that this was no business of the Senate we should have changed the statutes a year ago.”<sup>389</sup>

At the Senate meeting three days later, Professor Adair moved to reconsider the racial exclusion of Japanese Canadian students. Jewelry baron and university governor William Birks

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<sup>386</sup> Letter, Gwen R.B. Norman (née Roberts) to the McGill Senate, 14 November 1944, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>387</sup> Letter, H. Russell Ross to the Senate of McGill University, 21 November 1944, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>388</sup> Letter, F.C. James to C.J.L. Bates, 24 November 1944, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA. Emphasis added.

<sup>389</sup> Diary of Frank Cyril James, 12 December 1944, MG 1017, Container 49, Frank Cyril James Fonds, MUA.

seconded the motion. In the subsequent discussion, Professor Woodhead reiterated his previous points and called the justifications for exclusion “ill-founded.” Sticking his head in the sand, Wood claimed that “nothing that happened in 1943 or since made it necessary to reconsider the matter.” Seventeen people voted for Adair’s motion; nine opposed it. The motion failed to secure a two-thirds majority, losing by a single vote.<sup>390</sup> James reported in his diary, “I cast my vote (for the first time) with the minority, in order to defeat the motion.”<sup>391</sup>

The closeness of the vote perturbed Senate member and President of the Royal Victoria Hospital, Dr. W.W. Chipman, who complained to James the next day over cocktails about the “lack of what he calls moral qualities and wisdom in the representatives selected by the several faculties.”<sup>392</sup> Chipman likely referred to William Woodhead, Edward Adair, and Professor Frank Scott, a vocal supporter of Japanese Canadian civil rights who had been elected in the fall of 1944 to represent the Faculty of Law at McGill’s Senate.<sup>393</sup>

Hoping to prevent media coverage of the vote on Professor Adair’s motion, James wrote to Matthews on 20 December, advising him that, “I think it would be appropriate in answering the various communications that have been made to the Senate, to state that at the December meeting no action in regard to a change of the existing resolution but that notice has been given that the subject will be raised again at another meeting early in the New Year.”<sup>394</sup>

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<sup>390</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 15 December 1944, Senate Minute Book 1943 to 1945, RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA.

<sup>391</sup> Diary of Frank Cyril James, 15 December 1944, MG 1017, Container 47, Frank Cyril James Fonds, MUA.

<sup>392</sup> Diary of Frank Cyril James, 16 December 1944, MG 1017, Container 47, Frank Cyril James Fonds, MUA.

<sup>393</sup> Scott had notably referred to Dean Cyrus Macmillan as ‘Professor Windbag, Ph.D.’ in a poem for the *Fortnightly Review*.

<sup>394</sup> Letter, F.C. James to T.H. Matthews, 20 December 1944, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.



Matthews replied that,

It doesn't seem to me to be true to say that at Senate 'no action was taken in regard to the change of existing regulations'. Actually a vote was taken and a decision arrived at. That decision was, in fact, to stick to the present regulations. [...] Personally I think the University should publicly take responsibility for its decisions and if it decides to exclude Canadian Japanese, should say so, and be prepared to withstand criticism.<sup>395</sup>

## **James Contacts Other Universities**

James had told the Senate on 20 October 1943, that, "he thought Toronto and Queen's accepted Japanese and Manitoba and Alberta excluded them."<sup>396</sup> In November 1944, he told the *Gazette* that the Senate "had taken this action in common with a number of other universities."<sup>397</sup> In late December 1944, the Principal finally reached out to his counterparts at the University of New Brunswick, Dalhousie University, l'Université de Montréal, Laval University, Queen's University, the University of Toronto, the University of Manitoba, the University of Saskatchewan, the University of British Columbia, and the University of Alberta, requesting confidential reports on each institution's admissions policy toward Japanese Canadian students.

<sup>398</sup> None of the universities had officially banned Japanese Canadian students.

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<sup>395</sup> Letter, T.H. Matthews to F.C. James, 27 December 1944, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>396</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 20 October 1943, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>397</sup> "Banning Canadian-born Japanese From McGill Protested by Students," *The Gazette*, 15 November 1944.

<sup>398</sup> Letter, F.C. James to R.C. Wallace, 18 December 1944, RG 2 Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA. James chose not to reach out to Sir George Williams University in Montreal, where several Japanese Canadian students had already enrolled, including Lloyd and Lillian Yuriko Shimotakahara, and Kazuko Halfhide (née Hidaka). *A Degree of Justice*, 130, 132; Interview with Kazuko Halfhide (Hidaka), conducted by Rei Nakashima, 9 December 1986, MG 4247, Box 6, Container 31, File 22, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal, MUA.

In Ontario, the topic of admitting Japanese Canadian students had made headlines in the fall of 1942. Premier Mitchell Hepburn, who personally benefited from the underpaid labour of displaced young Japanese Canadian men on his farm in St. Thomas, learned that approximately ten Nisei then employed on Ontario farms had applied for admission to Ontario universities.<sup>399</sup> Premier Hepburn declared his opposition to their admission by any institution funded by the public treasury. He was the only Canadian Premier to publicly advocate for the complete exclusion of Japanese Canadian students from universities.<sup>400</sup>

Several Ontario universities cancelled Japanese Canadian students' registrations after Hepburn's speech.<sup>401</sup> In 1942, Queen's had accepted Hajime Kagetsu, one of the students turned away from McGill, to their graduate Engineering program. He was turned away upon arrival.<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>399</sup> "Queen's Takes Jap Students," *Windsor Star*, 15 September 1942. Former UBC students F. Richard (Dick) Shiozaki, Peter Yamada, Shigekazu Matthew Okuno, and Minoru Yatabe were among the Japanese Canadian farm labourers sponsored by Premier Mitchell Hepburn. Shiozaki was accepted to McMaster but chose not to go after seeing a friend turned away from Queen's. He spent three months on Archie Blue's beet farm near Iona, Ontario before making his way to Toronto. F. Richard (Dick) Shiozaki, "An Interview," 2012, *A Degree of Justice*, 137; Yamada and his family were sent to a dairy farm in Iona, Ontario. Yamada was accepted to study law at Osgoode Hall but was unable to go, possibly because of Hepburn's intervention. Letter, Peter Yamada to E.H. Morrow, 5 October 1942, Box 1, File 1-5, Japanese Canadian Commerce Students Collection/*Viewpoints Magazine*, UBC Archives, Vancouver B.C.; *A Degree of Justice*, 172; Okuno was paid one dollar a week at Hepburn's farm in St. Thomas, Ontario. *A Degree of Justice*, 111; Yatabe spent a year and a half on the St. Thomas farm. *A Degree of Justice*, 183.

<sup>400</sup> LaViolette, *The Canadian Japanese and World War II*, 306.

<sup>401</sup> Former UBC student Tatsuo Sanmiya lost his place at the University of Western Ontario. Letter, Alex J. Grant to E.H. Morrow, 7 December 1942, Box 1, File 1-3, Japanese Canadian Commerce Students Collection/*Viewpoints Magazine*, UBC Archives, Vancouver B.C.

<sup>402</sup> *A Degree of Justice*, 41; Kagetsu, *The Tree Trunk Can Be My Pillow*, 187.

Former UBC student Yutaka Richard Matsui, whose brothers had been working on Hepburn's farm, was similarly turned away from Queen's.<sup>403</sup>

Though Queen's initially followed Hepburn's whims by rejecting registered Japanese Canadian students like Kagetsu and Matsui, Principal R.C. Wallace had refused to commit to an official exclusionary policy toward them. He told the press that Queen's would accept "a limited number of Canadian born Japanese," emphasizing that they would have to be "vouched for" by the RCMP and the University of British Columbia.<sup>404</sup>

On 20 December 1944, Principal Wallace wrote to James,

the numbers have been small - at the present time four students - and they have created no problem in the University. Three years ago [...] there was strong feeling among some of our alumni groups that they should be excluded; and in that year we admitted no new Japanese students. Since that time we have admitted [several] after careful individual scrutiny. They have<sup>405</sup> proved to be cooperative, and are, as far as we can determine, loyal Canadian citizens.

Former UBC student Hideo John Miura was one of the Japanese Canadians finally accepted at Queen's. He earned his Mechanical Engineering degree in 1945.<sup>406</sup> Former UBC student Mariko Uyeda also finished her degree at Queen's.<sup>407</sup>

Controversy had erupted at the University of Toronto in November 1942 over the admission of eighteen German refugees recently released from internment camps, most of whom

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<sup>403</sup> *A Degree of Justice*, 64. Matsui was accepted at the University of Manitoba and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in 1944. Ken Adachi reports that six students in total were turned away from Queen's in 1942. Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was*, 265.

<sup>404</sup> "Queen's Takes Jap Students," *Windsor Star*, 15 September 1942.

<sup>405</sup> Letter, R.C. Wallace to F.C. James, 20 December 1944, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>406</sup> *A Degree of Justice*, 69. Miura's children recall that he "never felt any form of ill treatment or discrimination" at Queen's but faced employment challenges due to discrimination against Japanese Canadians. A colleague at his first job after graduation told their superiors he was Chinese Canadian to protect him from dismissal.

<sup>407</sup> *A Degree of Justice*, 164.

were Jewish. On 12 November, the Board of Governors defeated a motion from President H.J. Cody to accept the ‘friendly aliens.’ The heads of university’s federated Arts colleges, Victoria College, St. Michael’s College, and Trinity College, spoke out against the Board’s decision, and the University of Toronto Senate passed a resolution approving the ‘friendly alien’ admissions. After weeks of conflict between the Senate and Board of Governors, the Board finally agreed not to exclude the ‘friendly alien’ students. Three Japanese Canadians’ applications were mentioned in press coverage of the discussion because they had initially been reviewed by the same Board of Governors committee.<sup>408</sup>

The University of Toronto ultimately chose to admit numerous Japanese Canadian applicants, though one Nisei who grew up in B.C. was turned away because he had been born in Japan.<sup>409</sup> Former UBC student Geri T. Nikaido (Shiozaki) remembers that after her first application was turned down, W.T. Brown, the Principal of Victoria College, interceded on her behalf, arguing that Victoria College could grant her a degree in its own right.<sup>410</sup> Victoria College officials similarly welcomed former UBC student Shumpei Edward Yoshioka, who won multiple scholarships and received his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1944.<sup>411</sup> Former UBC students Shinko Mary Nagata and Yukio Henry Okada enrolled at the University of Toronto in 1943.<sup>412</sup> That September, medical student Harry Nikaido won praise for his performance on the varsity lacrosse team, and by the fall of 1944, three Japanese Canadians were playing in the Intramural

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<sup>408</sup> “Governors Ban Eighteen Ex-Internees,” *The Varsity*, 16 November 1942; “Aliens Admitted.” *The Varsity*, 11 December 1942.

<sup>409</sup> Letter from H.J. Cody to F.C. James, 22 December 1944, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA. As explained in Chapter 2, this student was Fred Sasaki.

<sup>410</sup> F. Richard (Dick) Shiozaki and Nikaido (Geri) T. Shiozaki, “An Interview,” 2012.

<sup>411</sup> *A Degree of Justice*, 185.

<sup>412</sup> *A Degree of Justice*, 78, 105.

Football Association.<sup>413</sup> In December 1944, Cody told James that, “The rule which we made at the beginning of the term was that we would admit Japanese, who were born in Canada, and were therefore British subjects, and who were permitted by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to attend the University. This rule seems to have worked very smoothly.”<sup>414</sup>

In Alberta, where Premier Ernest Manning had insisted the federal government remove all exiled Japanese Canadians after the war, the University of Alberta publicly vowed to accept Nisei students but restricted admissions through subtler means.<sup>415</sup> On 10 September 1942, University of Alberta President Robert Newton told the *Edmonton Journal* that “students with satisfactory academic merits are admitted to the University of Alberta regardless of racial origins.”<sup>416</sup> The registrar, Albert Ottewell, announced that six Japanese Canadian students would be registered for fall term of 1942. Still, Newton carefully emphasized that applicants must be Alberta residents.<sup>417</sup>

In his reply to James on 28 December 1944, Newton confided that the University of Alberta had deliberately defined residence in an exclusionary fashion: “Our Board of Governors laid down the general principle that as we are a provincial university, all Canadian citizens who are bona fide residents of this province have equal right to register with us, regardless of racial origin. In the case of Japanese [Canadians], bona fide residence was defined as residence in this

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<sup>413</sup> Betty-June McKenzie, “Varsity’s Lacrosse Wizard Is All-Round Athlete,” *The Varsity*, 25 September, 1943; C.B. Sissons, “Speaking of Sport,” *The Varsity*, 6 December, 1944.

<sup>414</sup> Letter, H.J. Cody to F.C. James, 22 December 1944, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>415</sup> Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism*, 125.

<sup>416</sup> “University Sets No Racial Bars,” *Edmonton Journal*, 20 September 1942.

<sup>417</sup> “6 Coast Japanese to Attend Varsity,” *Edmonton Journal*, 10 September 1942.

province prior to the date of Pearl Harbor.”<sup>418</sup> The example of Dentistry student Nori Nishio, who arrived in Edmonton in January 1942, demonstrates that this policy was not universally applied. U of A officials continued to point to stringent municipal policies to abdicate responsibility for the exclusion of Nisei students; in 1944, Newton announced that the university could not admit Japanese Canadians to the Faculty of Medicine due to city hospitals’ refusal to accept them as residents.<sup>419</sup>

University of Saskatchewan President James Thomson recounted that the issue of Nisei admission had come before their Board of Governors in 1942. They concluded that, “in our University act [...] we are explicitly prohibited from making any distinction of race or creed in the admission of students to the University.” He reported that while the city of Saskatoon passed a resolution banning Japanese Canadians from residence, the university managed to house two Japanese Canadian students in the school residence because it was technically outside city limits. Thomson added that at the end of the previous academic year, one Nisei student was selected by his peers to give a toast at the graduation banquet.<sup>420</sup> In his response, James claimed that, “in the case of McGill University there was not any suggestion of racial discrimination.” Deflecting attention from McGill’s racism toward Japanese Canadians, he highlighted the university’s acceptance of ‘Mohammedan’ students and students from the British West Indies.<sup>421</sup>

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<sup>418</sup> Letter, Robert Newton to F.C. James, 28 December 1944, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>419</sup> “Bar Jap Internees,” *Times Colonist*, 18 November 1944.

<sup>420</sup> Letter, J.S. Thomson to F.C. James, 23 December 1944, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>421</sup> Letter, F.C. James to J.S. Thomson, 27 December 1944, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

Cyrille Gagnon, Rector of Université Laval, reported that all Canadian citizens were welcome at his institution.<sup>422</sup> Olivier Maurault, Rector of l'Université de Montréal, wrote that nothing would prevent his university from accepting Japanese Canadians.<sup>423</sup> Brigadier Milton F. Gregg, President of the University of New Brunswick, indicated that they had not received any applications from Japanese Canadians but would accept them with RCMP approval.<sup>424</sup>

Carleton Stanley of Dalhousie voiced the most sympathy for the exclusion of Japanese Canadians, reporting that though his university had received no Nisei applicants since the war's outbreak, "the treachery of these people is well proven, and in wartime every individual and every institution is forced to be very cautious." He observed that one former Nisei student [George Tamaki] had performed admirably but "that was before the war broke out."<sup>425</sup> In his reply, James thanked Stanley for expressing, "precisely my own feeling about this problem of Canadian-born Japanese students."<sup>426</sup>

University of Manitoba President Henry Armes informed James that nineteen Nisei were currently enrolled there. He explained that in 1942, "the Senate and the Board of Governors approved the admission of a limited number of Japanese students who were Canadian born and who had formerly been registered at the University of British Columbia." The Senate had required a statement from the British Columbia Security Commission accepting liability in case

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<sup>422</sup> Letter, Cyrille Gagnon to F.C. James, 21 December 1944, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>423</sup> Letter, Olivier Maurault to F.C. James, 22 December 1944, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>424</sup> Letter, Milton F. Gregg to F.C. James, 22 December 1944, RG 2 Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>425</sup> Letter, Carleton Stanley to F.C. James, 27 December 1944, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>426</sup> Letter, F.C. James to Carleton Stanley, 2 January 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

any Japanese Canadian students defaulted on the payment of fees; Armes enclosed a copy of the liability form completed by the BCSC representatives.<sup>427</sup> Former UBC student Toshio Hirano earned his Honours Bachelor of Science degree there while the rest of his family remained in Bridge River, B.C.<sup>428</sup> Former UBC student Saburo Watanabe finished his electrical engineering degree at the University of Manitoba, as did former UBC student Yoichi Kato. Kato and another Nisei student boarded with a Winnipeg family whose sons were serving in England.<sup>429</sup>

Finally, Norman MacKenzie, Klinck's successor at the University of British Columbia, told James that though Japanese Canadians were still banned from the Pacific coast, "my own feeling is [...] that, if and when, the Japanese return to the coast, the University of British Columbia will be prepared to admit them as students provided they have the proper academic qualifications, as they did in the past." He added that he had been asked about Japanese Canadian admissions when he was President of the University of New Brunswick in 1942, and had answered then that, "we were prepared to accept any student regardless of his race, religion or nationality."<sup>430</sup>

On 4 January 1945, James forwarded the letters to Chancellor Wilson, writing that, "I am wondering whether in the light of this information you feel that it would be well to push the fight

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<sup>427</sup> Letter, H.P. Armes to F.C. James, 30 December 1944, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>428</sup> *A Degree of Justice, 1942* (Vancouver: n.p., 2017), 32.

<sup>429</sup> Yoichi Kato, 2012, "Yoichi Kato : An Interview with a UBC Japanese Canadian Student of 1942," UBC Japanese Canadian Students of 1942, doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14288/1.0107970>; *A Degree of Justice*, 170. Saburo Watanabe's brother Satoru was one of the two Japanese Canadian medical students allowed to stay at McGill during the period of official exclusion.

<sup>430</sup> Letter, Norman MacKenzie to F.C. James, 29 December 1944, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.



on this question along the lines that Arthur Wood has suggested.” Wood had evidently hoped to justify racial exclusion by pointing to similar policies across Canada.

### **A New Strategy of Containment**

Both the Chancellor and the Principal anticipated that Professor Scott’s familiarity with university statutes would allow him to challenge any anti-democratic attempt to protect the exclusion policy. James advised Wilson that “although the Senate has been temporarily stopped,” it was likely that Adair would soon secure a two-thirds majority to overturn the policy. James recommended that to delay Adair’s victory, the Chancellor could either call a joint meeting of the Board of Governors and Senate to vote on the policy, or appoint a joint committee comprised of five members of the Board of Governors and five members of the Senate to study the issue.<sup>431</sup>

Wilson reminded James that the new Statutes, updated in 1939, neglected to stipulate that a joint meeting of the Board of Governors and Senate could vote together. Regarding the possibility of a joint committee, he wrote “we don’t specifically say [in the Statutes] that the Principal has a vote but I suppose even a constitutional lawyer like Frank Scott would grant that if the Principal enjoys all the rights and privileges of a member of Senate he would have the casting vote in the case of a 50-50 tie in this committee.” Wilson commented that, “it does certainly make the Principal the goat - I mean he has to take the responsibility personally of casting the decision - which is of course what was meant at the time the Statutes were done but which makes his position a little unpopular academically!” Pointing to the Statutes’ specifications regarding admission, Wilson explained that each Faculty was required to meet “on

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<sup>431</sup> Letter, F.C. James to Morris Wilson, 4 January 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

this Japanese question” and report decisions to the Senate, who would then render a decision for each faculty. He concluded that “it seems to me clear that the procedure under our present Statutes wording is that Governors just OVERRULE SENATE.”<sup>432</sup>

### **The *McGill Daily* Leaks Senate Meeting Details**

Matthews sent James a draft of a statement to the *Daily* in which he stated that a motion to reconsider the racial exclusion policy had failed on 15 December, but James forbade him from revealing the results of the vote.<sup>433</sup> The *Daily* announced on 15 January 1945, that the issue had been discussed but no decision made; “A decision may or may not be reached on whether or not the ban will be reversed, at one of the coming monthly gatherings of Senate. No promise that such a decision would be definitely made was forthcoming by the Principal.”<sup>434</sup> The *Daily* editors lamented the next day that, “McGill’s reputation [is] under a black cloud and no amount of praise for her so-called war effort, or for her help to returned servicemen, can blow away that cloud. While the ban remains, McGill is open to severe criticism, and doubts as to her democratic purpose are legitimate.”<sup>435</sup>

The editorial also provided to the public, for the first time, a timeline of the two senate meetings in the fall of 1943, sharing, “according to first-hand information,” how the less exclusive policy passed on 30 September was reversed on 20 October. “Undeniably responsible sources” additionally revealed that the racial exclusion policy was passed to appease “people of

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<sup>432</sup> Memo, Morris Wilson to F.C. James, undated, January 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>433</sup> Letter, T.H. Matthews to F.C. James, 8 January 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>434</sup> “Ban of Japanese Not Yet Reversed,” *McGill Daily*, 15 January 1945.

<sup>435</sup> “Canadian-Japanese Student,” *McGill Daily*, 16 January 1945.

high influence whose disfavor with the University's policy might have some effect on its material welfare." On the Principal's copy of the editorial, his secretary Dorothy McMurray scrawled in red pencil, "who gave them this information?"<sup>436</sup> The culprit was likely LaViolette, who helped students organize protests, or Adair, Woodhead, or Scott.

### **Senate Amends the Rules of Procedure**

Wood continued brainstorming ways to stall the policy's repeal. Anticipating defeat in the Senate, he consulted his own lawyer to confirm that the Board of Governors could overrule them. James privately observed that he would rather avoid an altercation, and instructed the Chancellor to advise the Senate that the Governors intended to review their decision.<sup>437</sup>

At the Senate meeting on 17 January 1945, Professor Scott moved to amend Article VII of the Standing Rules of Protocol regarding motions to reconsider. The Rules of Procedure passed on 19 January 1944 had specified that "*in any circumstances*, the minimum vote required for the passing of a motion to reconsider shall be two-thirds of the members present."<sup>438</sup> Under Scott's amendment, "the minimum vote required for the passing of a motion to Reconsider, *if taken during the academic session in which the original Motion or Resolution was adopted*, shall be two-thirds of the members present; in all other cases the vote of a majority of those present

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<sup>436</sup> "Canadian-Japanese Student," *McGill Daily*, 16 January 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>437</sup> Diary of Frank Cyril James, 17 January 1945, MG 1017, Container 49, Frank Cyril James Fonds, McGill University Archives; Letter, Morris Wilson to F.C. James, 17 January 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>438</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 19 January 1944, Senate Minute Book 1943 to 1945, RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA. Emphasis added.

shall be sufficient.”<sup>439</sup> Under Scott’s amendment, the requirement of a two-thirds majority to reconsider the racial exclusion policy had already expired.

In the discussion, Dean Macmillan and Dr. Chipman argued that the Tyndale Committee’s rules of procedure were adequate. Dean O’Neill claimed that “the difference between a two-thirds majority and a simple majority was quite small and there could not be very much to be said for reconsidering any decision if it was not supported by two-thirds of the members present.”<sup>440</sup>

Professor Woodhead pointed out that the decision on 20 October 1943 to reconsider and overturn the first, less exclusive policy had failed to secure a two-thirds majority. James countered that the first policy had also failed to achieve a two-thirds majority; no one reminded the Principal that the first policy had not required a two-thirds majority as it was not a motion to reconsider. Professor Adair seconded Scott’s amendment, and it was carried by a vote of twelve to eleven.<sup>441</sup>

At the next meeting of the Senate, the opponents of the racial exclusion policy would only need a simple majority to pass a motion to reconsider it. Professor Adair once again gave a notice of motion to reconsider the racial exclusion of Japanese Canadian students at February’s meeting, and James read a letter from Chancellor Wilson announcing a full review by the Board of Governors in the event of the policy’s repeal.<sup>442</sup>

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<sup>439</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 17 January 1945, Senate Minute Book 1943 to 1945, RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA. Emphasis added.

<sup>440</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 17 January 1945, Senate Minute Book 1943 to 1945, RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA.

<sup>441</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 17 January 1945, Senate Minute Book 1943 to 1945, RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA.

<sup>442</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 17 January 1945, Senate Minute Book 1943 to 1945, RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA.

While the mood was shifting in McGill's Senate, the Board of Governors remained committed to racial exclusion and showed openness to overruling the Senate. The Board discussed the likelihood of the policy's repeal at a meeting on 14 February: "After a very long discussion it was ascertained that a substantial majority of the Board of Governors was opposed to any change being made in the present policy of the University and regarded the admission of Japanese [Canadian] students as a matter of University policy on which the Board would take jurisdiction if the Senate should wish to make any recommendation."<sup>443</sup>

### **Finally Repealed**

The Senate met again on 21 February. Professor Adair moved, and Professor Woodhead seconded, that Senate reconsider the ban on admitting Japanese Canadian students. Woodhead revealed that he had personally written to eight universities to ask if they admitted Japanese Canadians, and that none placed restrictions on Japanese Canadian undergraduate applicants. Dean of Medicine Jonathan Meakins "said that as a graduate of the University he hated to think that any citizen of this country was being refused admission to McGill on racial grounds and could not understand why the Japanese had been specially selected for this treatment, which seemed to him to suggest what happened in totalitarian countries rather than what should happen here." Dean of Music Douglas Clarke concurred with Dean Meakins.<sup>444</sup>

Professor Scott quoted a statement from Roger N. Baldwin that no Japanese nationals or Japanese Americans had been charged with sabotage or espionage. He reminded Senate that the

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<sup>443</sup> McGill Board of Governors Meeting Minutes, 14 February 1945, RG 4, McGill University Governors Minutes, 10 January 1945 to June 16 1948, MUA.

<sup>444</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 21 February 1945, Senate Minute Book 1943 to 1945, RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA.

McGill Veterans' Society had passed a resolution supporting Japanese Canadian admissions.

James attempted to dismiss the Veterans' Society's resolution because it had not been forwarded to the Senate. Adair said that while the policy may have impacted a relatively small number of Japanese Canadian students and applicants, "the harm done to the University [...] was great."<sup>445</sup>

James outlined the previous deliberations, and Macmillan again undermined the credibility of British Columbia Security Commission officer G.E. Trueman. Chancellor Wilson repeated the argument about the exclusion of Japanese Canadians from the Armed Services, and dismissed the Students' Society resolution, saying that only a small percentage of the entire student body had attended the meeting. Overwhelmed with emotion, Wood chose not to take part in the discussion, confiding later in the Principal that, "I was so provoked by the attitude taken by certain members, and by the statements made by one individual in particular, that had I attempted to express my views I could not have avoided speaking more forcefully than might have been considered good policy."<sup>446</sup>

Professor Keys echoed his earlier arguments about the war effort. Dr. Chipman hyperbolically declared that "the University was essentially a military zone," and alleged that Japanese Canadians' loyalty was divided. He warned that "the true friends of the University were those who supported it and [...] these true friends must not be antagonized or estranged." Finally, he conceded that Japanese Canadians would eventually be allowed to return to McGill, but urged

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<sup>445</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 21 February 1945, Senate Minute Book 1943 to 1945, RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA.

<sup>446</sup> Letter, A.B. Wood to F.C. James, 22 February 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

the Senate “to admit Canadian students of Japanese ancestry under some appropriate quota system when peace came.”<sup>447</sup>

Two Senate members’ responses to the motion illustrate the success of James and Chipman’s warnings about upsetting the Board of Governors. William Birks expressed his personal sympathy for the Nisei, but cautioned against creating friction between the Senate and Board of Governors, saying that “many benefactors of the University would be opposed to the admission of Japanese students.” C.W. Colby, who had voted for the less exclusive policy on 30 September 1943, similarly decried racism but prioritized the university’s powerful benefactors and the maintenance of harmony between McGill’s governing bodies.<sup>448</sup>

Adair commented that, “there had been a suggestion that Senate should hesitate before expressing its views if these were not acceptable to the generous benefactors of the University, [and added] that it would be an exceedingly bad thing if any impression of this sort got abroad.” James called Adair’s comments “inappropriate,” declaring that all members were free to vote according to their convictions.

The question to reconsider was put to a vote, and carried by a margin of fourteen to ten. Professor Scott moved, and Professor Woodhead seconded, “Resolved that all decisions or regulations of Senate imposing special restrictions on the admission to McGill University of Canadian students of Japanese origin be repealed.” Dean O’Neill proposed an amendment to postpone the resolution until the end of the war, losing by a vote of eleven to fourteen. Scott’s motion to repeal succeeded with a vote of fourteen to seven. The Senate had finally repealed its

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<sup>447</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 21 February 1945, Senate Minute Book 1943 to 1945, RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA.

<sup>448</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 21 February 1945, Senate Minute Book 1943 to 1945, RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA.

policy of excluding Japanese Canadians from admission. James ordered the assembled members to keep silent about the decision until the Board of Governors reviewed it.<sup>449</sup>

On 3 March, Sociology professor Forrest LaViolette finally wrote to the Principal to explain the position of Japanese Canadians in the military. He relayed that at a recent visit to the Department of Labour office in Toronto, Eastern Supervisor McTavish had shared orders from a Lieutenant Thomas that two hundred Nisei had been recruited for intelligence work.<sup>450</sup> James was away that week; acting Principal Cyrus Macmillan promised to verify the accuracy of his information, eventually dismissing it as “not accurate.”<sup>451</sup> James had already conceded awareness that Japanese Canadians were employed as military interpreters in November 1944, but would likely have equally ignored LaViolette’s report.

As the proponents of exclusion defended their policy in the winter of 1945, LaViolette gave lectures in Montreal and Toronto describing the politically motivated disenfranchisement of both Chinese Canadians and Japanese Canadians, and the material dispossession of Japanese Canadians.<sup>452</sup> Despite his touted expertise and personal sympathies, LaViolette appears to have made no other direct appeals to the Principal or McGill’s Senate regarding the exclusion of

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<sup>449</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 21 February 1945, Senate Minute Book 1943 to 1945, RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA.

<sup>450</sup> Letter, Forrest LaViolette to F.C. James, 3 March 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>451</sup> Letter, Cyrus Macmillan to Forrest LaViolette, 7 March 1945; Letter from Cyrus Macmillan to Forrest LaViolette, 6 April 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>452</sup> “Professor F. LaViolette to Speak,” *McGill Daily*, 23 January 1945; “Women’s Club Hears Laviolette,” *McGill Daily*, 13 February 1945; “Prof. Laviolette Addresses Club in Toronto,” *McGill Daily*, 2 March 1945; “Evacuation Defeated Assimilation,” *New Canadian*, 3 March 1945.



Japanese Canadian students, though he may have provided information to the Senate members who were working to repeal the policy.

LaViolette had quietly supported the students who protested in the fall of 1944. He addressed the Cosmopolitan Club shortly after McGill's racial ban was publicized and likely updated them about the employment of Japanese Canadian military interpreters.<sup>453</sup> Joy Powles Smith recalls that the Students' Society protests were "organized on the professorial side with Professor LaViolette."<sup>454</sup>

### **The Board of Governors Intervenes**

On 15 April 1945, James had lunch at the Mount Royal Club with Dr. Chipman, who expressed anger at the Senate's democratic repeal of the racial exclusion policy. James told him, as he had told the Chancellor, that the Board of Governors should authorize a special conference committee to delay the Senate's decision of 21 February from being implemented.<sup>455</sup> When the Board of Governors' met on 9 May, Canadian Pacific Railway President D'Alton Corry Coleman moved, and John Ross seconded, that "the Chancellor be authorized to appoint five members of the Board of Governors to the special conference committee for the purpose of discussing the

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<sup>453</sup> "Laviolette Will Address Club, *McGill Daily*, 24 October 1944.

<sup>454</sup> Interview with Joy Powles Smith conducted by Sandra Kawai and Melissa Steele, 15 January 1987, MG 4247, Box 25, Container 33, File 35; Betty Kobayashi Issenman recalls befriending Forrest LaViolette in the 1940s. Letter, Betty Kobayashi Issenman to John Meehan, 7 October 1999, MG 4247, Box 31, File 56, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal, MUA.

<sup>455</sup> Diary of Frank Cyril James, 15 April 1945, MG 1017, Container 49, Frank Cyril James Fonds, MUA.

problem with five members of the Senate and making a recommendation to the Board.”<sup>456</sup> The Board of Governors had not disagreed with a Senate decision in six years.<sup>457</sup>

On 16 May, the Board of Governors officially refused to accept the Senate’s decision to repeal the exclusionary policy and invited the Senate to nominate five members for the joint conference committee.<sup>458</sup> The Senate appointed five members who had voted to repeal the racial exclusion policy; Dean Meakins, Dean Thompson, Professor Adair, Professor Scott, and Sociology Professor Carl Dawson.<sup>459</sup> Chancellor Wilson nominated Dr. Chipman, Mr. Colby, Mr. Coleman, Mr. Wood, and Senator Hugessen from the Board of Governors.<sup>460</sup> Chipman, Coleman, and Wood remained determined to continue excluding Japanese Canadians; Colby had expressed sympathy for Japanese Canadians but prioritized the comfort of racist benefactors, and Hugessen had long opposed the racial exclusion policy.

James scolded Matthews for accurately describing the repeal of the policy as a decision in his invitation to the conference committee meeting, writing, “your last paragraph should read that the Board of Governors formally resolved that it could not accept the Senate’s

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<sup>456</sup> McGill Board of Governors Meeting Minutes, 9 May 1945, RG 4, McGill University Governors Minutes, 10 January 1945 to 16 June 1948, MUA.

<sup>457</sup> Letter, F.C. James to F.R. Scott, 25 May 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA. The Senate briefly protested when the Board of Governors enacted new statutes in 1939. See McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 17 January 1940, Senate Minute Book 1938 to 1940, RG 8, Container 11, File 355, Senate, MUA.

<sup>458</sup> Letter, T.H. Matthews to Meakins, Thomson, Adair, Dawson and Scott, 19 May 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>459</sup> Letter, F.C. James to Morris Wilson, 17 May 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>460</sup> Letter, Morris Wilson to F.C. James, 18 May 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

*recommendation.*”<sup>461</sup> Matthews challenged the Principal, pointing to the wording of the Senate minutes from 21 February and emphasizing the decision’s legality within Senate jurisdiction.<sup>462</sup>

Professor Scott confronted James, reminding him that the racial exclusion policy of 20 October 1943 had not been confirmed by the Board of Governors, and that McGill’s statutes did not characterize Senate decisions as recommendations.<sup>463</sup> The Principal was forced to admit that he had “phrased the matter somewhat clumsily,” and explained to Scott that when the Board of Governors had been informed of Senate’s less exclusive admissions policy passed on 30 September 1943, the governors had effectively overruled the Senate by orchestrating the reconsideration at the meeting of 20 October. James thanked Scott for his analysis and promised that the joint conference committee was “the happiest method of preventing a divergence of opinion from becoming serious.”<sup>464</sup> James understood that Scott knew the university statutes too well to fall for prevarications about regulations.

### **The Conference Committee Meets**

The conference committee met on 5 June, and passed the following draft resolution:

1. That, in all faculties, men and women applying for admission to the University after demobilization from the armed forces shall be given priority over civilian students of equal standing.
2. That until the conclusion of hostilities with Japan, no faculty shall admit a Canadian-born student of Japanese ancestry unless (1) his suitability has been vouched for by the R.C.M.P., (2) he has the proper academic qualifications and (3) his admission does

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<sup>461</sup> Letter, F.C. James to T.H. Matthews, 21 May 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA. Emphasis added.

<sup>462</sup> Letter, T.H. Matthews to F.C. James, 22 May 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>463</sup> Letter, F.R. Scott to F.C. James, 23 May 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>464</sup> Letter, F.C. James to F.R. Scott, 25 May 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

not preclude, or in any way interfere with, the admission of a qualified student coming from the armed forces after demobilization. It is further recommended by the Committee that this resolution, if adopted by the Board of Governors, should not be released to the Press for general publicity, since <sup>465</sup>no useful purpose can be served by a revival of public controversy regarding the matter.

Senator Hugessen remarked to James that McGill was long past the point of avoiding adverse publicity, pointing to a letter from American novelist Pearl Buck published in the 18 June 1945 edition of *Time* magazine.<sup>466</sup> Buck wrote that “Canadian and British citizens of Japanese ancestry cannot attend—for all practical purposes—any college or university. McGill bars them on the frank contention that serfs of inferior races deserve no education.” *Time*’s editor clarified that “McGill is the only Canadian university which bans Canadian Japanese.”<sup>467</sup>

The resolution’s superfluous stipulations about proper academic qualifications and interference with demobilized soldiers’ admission were designed to appease the supporters of racial exclusion while technically repealing the exclusive policy. Dean Thomson remarked to James that,

The recommendation as drafted appears to me to differ from the wording used at the meeting [...] in my recollection, the second recommendation was originally cast in a positive rather than a negative form, that is in the form ‘shall admit if’ rather than ‘shall not admit unless’. I prefer the original form for several reasons, one being that the present version seems rather to encourage any faculty which wishes to do so to exclude even those who meet the formal qualifications.<sup>468</sup>

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<sup>465</sup> “Report to the Board of Governors of the Conference Committee appointed to consider the recommendations from the Senate regarding the admission of Canadian-born Japanese students to McGill University during the period of the present war,” 4 June 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA. Note that Adair and Colby were absent from the meeting.

<sup>466</sup> Letter, A.K. Hugessen to F.C. James, 6 July 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>467</sup> Pearl Buck, Letter to the editor, *Time* 45 (no. 25): 18 June 1945.

<sup>468</sup> Letter, D.L. Thomson to F.C. James, 6 July 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

James admitted that the begrudgingly worded decision to stop excluding Japanese Canadian students “is a compromise designed to attain unanimity.”<sup>469</sup>

## Wood Fights On

Neither Dean Macmillan nor Dean O’Neill pressed the matter. Mr. Coleman told James that he would not object to the conference committee report despite personally opposing its conclusions.<sup>470</sup> Wood fought on. He bitterly rejected the draft resolution, demanding, “that our own [civilian] boys and girls, at least, should have priority over the Japanese.”<sup>471</sup> In his attached commentary, he stated that,

It will be noted that practically all the resolutions [against the policy] are on the ground of racial discrimination as such, although many red herrings have been drawn. The only reply is that the University has never indulged in racial discrimination. Even in our treatment of Hebrews and all foreigners we have been much more indulgent than any other Canadian university and have had a greater proportion of these at all times, and at the present time (no doubt due to the war) an even higher proportion than at any time in the past.<sup>472</sup>

Wood misrepresented the admissions policies at other Canadian universities, claiming that, “Some do [admit Japanese Canadians] and some do not. It is probably about equally divided. In any case, the matter has not been discussed at all by the Universities Conference and McGill is a private university and free to make its own independent decisions on these matters.” He offered James his own amendments to the draft resolution, insisting that priority be given to

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<sup>469</sup> Letter, F.C. James to D.L. Thomson, 9 July 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>470</sup> Letter, D.C. Coleman to F.C. James, 18 July 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>471</sup> Letter, A.B. Wood to F.C. James, 7 June 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>472</sup> Letter, A.B. Wood to F.C. James, 7 June 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA. Underlined in original.

“civilian students of Canadian nationality other than Japanese” and foreign students from the Allied countries over Japanese Canadians.<sup>473</sup>

In his reply, James declined to adopt Wood’s recommended regulations but promised him that Dean Macmillan and Dean O’Neill would continue to exclude Nisei from the respective faculties of Arts and Engineering, and “in Medicine the Clinical difficulties at the teaching hospitals make it impossible to admit more than one or two in spite of Dean Meakins’ attitude towards the whole problem.”<sup>474</sup>

The Principal’s message failed to pacify Wood. He took time out of his holiday at the Seignior Club to further scold James, calling the draft resolution “a complete surrender to the position taken by Scott and Adair” and even accusing him of treating the proponents of exclusion unfairly.<sup>475</sup> James gave the Sun Life president a week to cool down, promising that they could discuss it again in person.<sup>476</sup> Wood may have hoped the Board of Governors would veto the Senate’s decision but James, ever sensitive to scandal, hoped to avoid repeating the much publicized controversy at the University of Toronto in 1942, when the Board of Governors and Senate had butted heads over their admissions policy toward ‘friendly aliens.’<sup>477</sup>

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<sup>473</sup> Memo, A.B. Wood to F.C. James, 7 June 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>474</sup> Letter, F.C. James to A.B. Wood, 5 July 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>475</sup> Letter, A.B. Wood to F.C. James, 11 July 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>476</sup> Letter, F.C. James to A.W. Wood, 19 July 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>477</sup> “Governors Ban Eighteen Ex-Internees,” *The Varsity*, 16 November 1942.

With the exception of Wood, the members of the joint conference committee conveyed their approval of the draft resolution.<sup>478</sup> On 27 July, James forwarded it to all McGill's Deans, still framing Japanese Canadian admissions as "a problem" and highlighting the subsections privileging veterans over civilians.<sup>479</sup> The resolution was presented to a meeting of the Board of Governors on 12 September 1945. With the dissent of A.B. Wood, they resolved to adopt the resolution.<sup>480</sup>

The registrar, T.H. Matthews, had recognized that the battle against the racial exclusion of Japanese Canadian students had been won. As James and the Board of Governors attempted to delay the Senate's decision with a joint conference committee in the spring and summer of 1945, Matthews had admitted five Japanese Canadian applicants. In the fall of 1945, Myoshi Nakashima, George Kobayashi, Henry Satoshi Tamaki, and George Shimotakahara's cousins,

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<sup>478</sup> Letter, A.K. Hugessen to Dorothy McMurray, 6 June 1945; Letter from D.L. Thomson to F.C. James, 7 June 1945; Letter from J.C. Meakins to F.C. James, 7 June 1945; Letter from C.A. Dawson to F.C. James, 9 July 1945; Letter from F.R. Scott to F.C. James, 14 July 1945; RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>479</sup> Memo, F.C. James to W.H. Brittain, J.J. O'Neill, J.C. Meakins, Douglas Clarke, D.L. Thomson, C.S. LeMesurier, Sinclair Laird, Cyrus Macmillan, 27 July 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>480</sup> Board of Governors Meeting Minutes, 12 September 1945, RG 4, McGill University Governors Minutes, 10 January 1945 to June 16 1948, MUA.

Hazel and Margaret Shimotakahara, began their undergraduate studies at McGill.<sup>481</sup> By the fall of 1952, 33 Japanese Canadians were enrolled at McGill.<sup>482</sup>

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<sup>481</sup> ‘Old McGill’ entry, 1949, Myoshi Nakashima, [http://yearbooks.mcgill.ca/viewbook.php?&campus=downtown&book\\_id=1949#page/80/mode/1up](http://yearbooks.mcgill.ca/viewbook.php?&campus=downtown&book_id=1949#page/80/mode/1up); ‘Old McGill’ entry, 1948, George Kobayashi, [http://yearbooks.mcgill.ca/viewbook.php?&campus=downtown&book\\_id=1948#page/130/mode/1up](http://yearbooks.mcgill.ca/viewbook.php?&campus=downtown&book_id=1948#page/130/mode/1up); ‘Old McGill’ entry, 1949, Henry Satoshi Tamaki, [http://yearbooks.mcgill.ca/viewbook.php?&campus=downtown&book\\_id=1949#page/134/mode/1up](http://yearbooks.mcgill.ca/viewbook.php?&campus=downtown&book_id=1949#page/134/mode/1up); ‘Old McGill’ entry, 1949, Hazel Shimotakahara, [http://yearbooks.mcgill.ca/viewbook.php?&campus=downtown&book\\_id=1949#page/73/mode/1up](http://yearbooks.mcgill.ca/viewbook.php?&campus=downtown&book_id=1949#page/73/mode/1up); ‘Old McGill’ entry, 1949, Margaret Shimotakahara, [http://yearbooks.mcgill.ca/viewbook.php?&campus=downtown&book\\_id=1949#page/80/mode/1up](http://yearbooks.mcgill.ca/viewbook.php?&campus=downtown&book_id=1949#page/80/mode/1up); James’s promises to Wood never came to pass. Dean Macmillan had failed to keep Nakashima or the Shimotakahara sisters out of the Faculty of Arts and Science; Dean O’Neill was equally unable to prevent Kobayashi or Tamaki from entering the Faculty of Engineering.

<sup>482</sup> “Nisei Enrolment at McGill Tripled in Three Years, Over 30 Attend,” *New Canadian*, November 1, 1952.



## Epilogue

### Unquantifiable Loss

Many Japanese Canadians express grief over their loss of education opportunities as a result of internment. Mona Oikawa recalls her mother's "deep regret for the termination of her schooling." Several women she interviewed for *Cartographies of Violence* also mourn the interruption of their education.<sup>483</sup> When Pamela Sugiman interviewed Japanese Canadian women who were adolescents and young adults in the 1940s, she found that many were unable to finish high school and very few were able to attend university.<sup>484</sup> For exiled UBC student Akiko Kagetsu, "her biggest regret was that she never received her Bachelor of Arts degree."<sup>485</sup> Oikawa notes that loss of education cannot be accounted for in assessments of Japanese Canadian dispossession such as the audit conducted by Price Waterhouse in 1986.<sup>486</sup>

### A Student Displaced Again

After passing its racially exclusive admissions policy, McGill expelled one Japanese Canadian Science student, Ryo Otsuki. He is listed in the 1943-1944 Directory of Students; it is unclear if he managed to complete the winter term of 1944. Otsuki may have been singled out because Matthews had surreptitiously admitted him in 1943, at a time when Principal James was

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<sup>483</sup> Oikawa, *Cartographies of Violence*, xi, 148, 160. Interviewees 'May' and 'Haru,' in particular, both refer to loss of education.

<sup>484</sup> Sugiman, "Memories of Internment," 363; Sugiman, "'Life is Sweet,'" 194. One interviewee recounts being forced to leave business school in Sugman, "Passing Time," 71.

<sup>485</sup> *A Degree of Justice*, 39.

<sup>486</sup> Oikawa, *Cartographies of Violence*, 108. According to the Price Waterhouse report, Japanese Canadians lost 48 million dollars worth of assets and property in 1948 dollars.

discouraging the admission of Japanese Canadian students without officially banning them. The Dean of Arts and Science, Cyrus Macmillan, a passionate advocate for the racial exclusion policy, may have taken a special interest in expelling Otsuki from his faculty.<sup>487</sup>

Internment had already interrupted Ryo Otsuki's education before he arrived at McGill. The British Columbia Security Commission forced his family from their home while he was still attending high school.<sup>488</sup> His brother, Juko Shigeyuki Otsuki, whose own UBC career was interrupted, recounted to his children that their family "lost everything."<sup>489</sup> After starting over in Winnipeg, Ryo graduated from Lord Kitchener High School in 1943 with high enough marks to be accepted by McGill. In 1945, after being expelled from McGill, he started over yet again at the University of New Brunswick, graduating in 1949 with a degree in Electrical Engineering. In his entry for *Up the Hill*, the University of New Brunswick yearbook, Ryo Otsuki's classmates describe him as an asset to the campus community: "Possessed of a keen mind and a sense of responsibility, we will ever be proud to claim him as one of our own."<sup>490</sup> Years later, Ryo and his brother Juko would tell the latter's children that "no one can take your education away from you."<sup>491</sup>

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<sup>487</sup> *McGill University Directory of Students, 1943-1944* (Montreal: McGill University, 1944), 60.

<sup>488</sup> *A Degree of Justice*, 117-118.

<sup>489</sup> *A Degree of Justice*, 117; Bernard, "A University at War," 53-54. In 1942, Juko was in his third year of Arts and Science at UBC and served as a cadet in the COTC. He managed to transfer to the University of Manitoba and graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Physics and Mathematics before continuing graduate studies at the University of Toronto.

<sup>490</sup> University of New Brunswick, *Up the Hill*, Fredericton: NB, 1949, University of New Brunswick Archives, Fredericton, New Brunswick.

<sup>491</sup> *A Degree of Justice*, 118.

## The Students Who Stayed

Though the remaining Japanese Canadian students on campus were not expelled, observing Otsuki's abrupt departure must have been demoralizing for them. The three British Columbian transplants, Kiyokazu Jack Momose, George Shimotakahara, and Satoru Watanabe, had all been admitted before Macmillan, Wood, and James began advocating for official racial exclusion, and Dean Thomson had persuaded Senate not to make the policy retroactive.<sup>492</sup>

Watanabe and Shimotakahara graduated in the spring of 1944.<sup>493</sup> The two medical students had encountered racism from white colleagues: Shimotakahara recalls fellow students hissing at Watanabe when they first arrived on campus. Shimotakahara also remembers being refused an internship at the General Hospital. Despite these experiences of racism, both students succeeded in their classes and Dr. Shimotakahara ultimately found a position at the Royal Victoria Hospital, where he got along well with fellow staff.<sup>494</sup>

Kiyokazu Jack Momose completed his Bachelor of Science degree in the spring of 1944 and notably began medical school at McGill that fall, while the racial exclusion policy was still in effect.<sup>495</sup> Both the registrar, T.H. Matthews, and the Dean of Medicine, J.C. Meakins, opposed the racial exclusion policy and may have quietly arranged for his admission. Momose was active

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<sup>492</sup> Minutes of Senate Meeting, 30 September 1943, Senate Minute Book 1943 to 1945, RG 8, Container 11, File 357, McGill University Archives, Montreal, Quebec (MUA).

<sup>493</sup> "148 Gain Success in Medical Exams," *Gazette*, 9 July 1945.

<sup>494</sup> Interview with George Shimotakahara, conducted by Akemi Arakawa, 30 June 1982, MG 4247, Container 19, File 7, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal Fonds, MUA. Unfortunately, Dr. Watanabe passed away in 1970, before the oral history project began.

<sup>495</sup> Yearbook entry, 1944, Kiyokazu Jack Momose, [http://yearbooks.mcgill.ca/viewbook.php?&campus=downtown&book\\_id=1944#page/27/mode/1up](http://yearbooks.mcgill.ca/viewbook.php?&campus=downtown&book_id=1944#page/27/mode/1up); Yearbook entry, 1948, Kiyokazu Jack Momose, [http://yearbooks.mcgill.ca/viewbook.php?&campus=downtown&book\\_id=1948#page/176/mode/1up](http://yearbooks.mcgill.ca/viewbook.php?&campus=downtown&book_id=1948#page/176/mode/1up).

in the Student Christian Movement and the Camera Club, and served as the photography editor for the yearbook, *Old McGill*. As he watched McGill administrators defend their discriminatory policy during his first term of medical school, he may have taken comfort in his campus friendships and the anti-racist letters and editorials published in the *McGill Daily* and the *New Canadian*.

In practice, it was impossible for McGill administrators to identify all students “of Japanese racial origin.”<sup>496</sup> Registrar T.H. Matthews explained in a memo to the Principal in 1945 that McGill’s registration cards had never indicated the nationality of grandparents or other information about “national extraction.” Many students listing residences in Japan were the children of white missionaries. Looking for students with Japanese surnames was futile; Matthews pointed to a student with a Japanese mother and a non-Japanese father, whose surname allowed them to escape detection in the university’s records.<sup>497</sup>

As described in Chapter 4, at least one other student with a Japanese father and non-Japanese mother, Mary Campbell Kobayashi Hecht, attended McGill during the period of exclusion. She had already adopted her husband’s surname by the time she applied to McGill, which may have facilitated her admission to the Public Health Nursing program in 1944. Hecht served as Class President before graduating in 1945.<sup>498</sup> Judging by his surname, French transplant, Maurice Takeshige may also have had a Japanese father or other Japanese ancestry.

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<sup>496</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 20 October 1943, Senate Minute Book 1943 to 1945. RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA.

<sup>497</sup> Memo, T.H. Matthews to F.C. James, 14 February 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA. This student’s name remains redacted.

<sup>498</sup> Yearbook entry, 1945, Mary Campbell Hecht née Kobayashi, [http://yearbooks.mcgill.ca/viewbook.php?&campus=downtown&book\\_id=1945#page/117/mode/1up](http://yearbooks.mcgill.ca/viewbook.php?&campus=downtown&book_id=1945#page/117/mode/1up); “Hecht-Kobayashi,” *Gazette*, 14 December 1942. In 1941, Hecht won the highest honors in the Provincial Registered Nurses Examinations.

He appears to have evaded scrutiny in Dean O'Neill's Faculty of Engineering, where he began his degree in the fall of 1943 and graduated in 1947.<sup>499</sup>

## Defying Exclusion

Two other Japanese Canadian students managed to enroll at McGill during the period of official exclusion. Kimiaki Nakashima, the son of dispossessed fruit farmers from Mission City, B.C., arrived to begin his graduate degree in Economics in September 1944; Professor Forrest LaViolette greeted him at the train station.<sup>500</sup> He wrote his thesis on the economic consequences of Japanese Canadian exile from the Pacific coast.<sup>501</sup> In the spring of 1944, exiled UBC student George Yamashita met with Earl Beach, head of McGill's School of Commerce, to apply for an evening course in chartered accountancy. In August, Yamashita told his mentor, Professor Ellis Morrow, that he would be starting the course on 1 October.<sup>502</sup> His parents had recently arrived in Montreal and opened a boarding house for McGill students on Prince Arthur Street.<sup>503</sup> Like

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<sup>499</sup> *McGill University Directory of Students, 1943-1944*, Montreal: McGill University, 1944; *McGill University Directory of Students, 1944-1945*, Montreal: McGill University, 1945; Yearbook entry, 1947, Maurice Takeshige, [http://yearbooks.mcgill.ca/viewbook.php?&campus=downtown&book\\_id=1947#page/153/mode/1up](http://yearbooks.mcgill.ca/viewbook.php?&campus=downtown&book_id=1947#page/153/mode/1up)

<sup>500</sup> Interview with Kim Nakashima, 21 July 1982, MG 4247, Container 32, Box 24, File 37, "Kimiaki Nakashima," Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal, MUA. Nakashima had received his Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of Washington in 1939.

<sup>501</sup> Interview with Kim Nakashima, 21 July 1982, MG 4247, Box 24, Container 32, File 37, "Kimiaki Nakashima," Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal, McGill University Archives, Montreal, Quebec; Kimiaki Nakashima, "Economic Aspects of Japanese Evacuation from the Canadian Pacific Coast: A Contribution to the Study of the Economic Consequences of Social Groups and Displaced Persons," M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1946.

<sup>502</sup> Letter, George Yamashita to E.H. Morrow, 13 March 1944; Letter, George Yamashita to E.H. Morrow, 12 August 1944, Box 1, File 1-6, Japanese Canadian Commerce Students Collection/*Viewpoints* Magazine, UBC Archives, Vancouver B.C.; *A Degree of Justice*, 178.

<sup>503</sup> Interview with Tom Yamashita conducted by Melissa Steele, 1987, MG 4247, Container 33, Box 25, File 88, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal Fonds, MUA.

Momose, Nakashima and Yamashita were probably accepted to McGill due to the registrar's personal sympathy and the quiet approval of D.L. Thomson, the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, and Professor Beach.

George Yamashita recalls that, "as time went along and [our fellow students] got to know us, they accepted us."<sup>504</sup> Recalling the expulsion of Ryo Otsuki, Nakashima mistakenly remembers the ban on Japanese Canadian students only applying to the Science faculty.<sup>505</sup> He did not meet any of the other Japanese Canadian students during his time at McGill. In his program, he remembers, "I didn't feel any discrimination."<sup>506</sup> While Nakashima's comments should not be interpreted as evidence that McGill was a racially inclusive utopia in the 1940s, they do counteract claims that racism from white students would have prevented Japanese Canadians from succeeding in their studies.

Racist members of McGill's Senate passed its racial exclusion policy to deny opportunities to academically qualified Japanese Canadians. While shutting its doors to eligible applicants, McGill forced Ryo Otsuki to defray the cost of relocating yet again and graduate later than anticipated. He lost the tuition he had paid to McGill at a time when his family had few resources to spare. McGill's racial exclusion policy nonetheless failed to prevent George Shimotakahara, Satoru Watanabe, Kiyokazu Jack Momose, Mary Campbell Kobayashi Hecht,

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<sup>504</sup> Interview with George Yamashita, conducted by Kathleen Merken and Kathleen Hayami, 27 July 1987, MG 4247, Box 25 Container 33, File 87, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal, MUA. Yamashita had been turned away from McGill in 1943.

<sup>505</sup> Interview with Rei and Kim Nakashima, Tape 2, 1976, Canadian Centennial Project Fonds, Nikkei National Museum, Burnaby, B.C.

<https://digital.lib.sfu.ca/johc-484/01-2010233437-tape-2> (accessed 11 August 2019).

<sup>506</sup> Interview with Kim Nakashima, 21 July 1982, MG 4247, Box 24, Container 32, File 37, "Kimiaki Nakashima," Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal, MUA.

Maurice Takeshige, Kimiaki Naskashima, George Yamashita, and at least one other unnamed student from finishing their studies.<sup>507</sup>

### **False Claims about Military Service**

Dean Cyrus Macmillan, Sun Life President and McGill governor A.B. Wood, Principal James, and their allies emphasized the exclusion of Japanese Canadians from military service to defend their exclusion from the right to a university education. At the fateful Senate meeting of 20 October 1943, Wood insisted that, “by action of the Dominion Government they had been deprived of some of their full rights of Canadian citizenship and were not allowed to enter the Armed Forces or munition plants, and personally he would like to see them excluded from the University altogether.”<sup>508</sup> James later claimed in a letter to University of Saskatchewan President James Thomson,

we were informed by the government that [Japanese Canadians] were not allowed to enlist in the Armed Forces nor were they allowed to work in war industries and indeed, we were not allowed to require them to take military training along with the other students. Their position therefore was one that did not permit them to make any contribution to the war effort so that, until the end of the war, it was decided that they should not be allowed to use the training facilities of the University.<sup>509</sup>

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<sup>507</sup> Memo, T.H. Matthews to F.C. James, 14 February 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA. The unnamed student had a Japanese or Japanese Canadian mother and a non-Japanese father.

<sup>508</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 20 October 1943, Senate Minute Book 1943 to 1945, RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA.

<sup>509</sup> Letter, F.C. James to J.S. Thomson, 27 December 1944, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA. James did concede to Queen’s Principal Wallace in December 1944 that he knew Japanese Canadians were working as translators. Letter, F.C. James to R.C. Wallace, 27 December 1944, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA. It is notable that Principal James sympathized with students targeted by racist federal measures on other occasions: in August 1942, he expressed disappointment when a dentistry student from the British West Indies, Joseph Saltibus, reported that his application to serve as an officer in the Dental Corps was rejected on racial grounds. James argued that black British subjects ought to be trained and given the opportunity to serve

Despite such justifications, Canadian Officers' Training Corps records indicate that McGill's Japanese Canadian students *had* completed the requisite military service and even served as cadets there during its racial exclusion period. George Shimotakahara and Satoru Watanabe had already finished Basic Training at the University of British Columbia, and completed the Basic Training S. course in the McGill Reserve Training Battalion during the 1941-1942 academic term, before McGill passed its racial exclusion policy.<sup>510</sup> Kiyokazu Jack Momose also served as a cadet. He was first added to the strength as a member of the No. 5 detachment on 1 May 1942 alongside Senator Adrian K. Hugessen's son Kenneth.<sup>511</sup> Momose attended a training camp at Trois Rivières that month and was finally struck off the strength for the last time on 1 March 1946.<sup>512</sup> He had been posted to the No. 1 Coy on 19 September 1944, while McGill's exclusion policy was in effect.<sup>513</sup> Maurice Takeshige also served in the Canadian Officers' Training Corp during the 1944 -1945 academic year.<sup>514</sup>

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the British Army. Diary of Frank Cyril James, 13 August 1942, MG 1017, Container 47, Frank Cyril James Fonds, MUA.

<sup>510</sup> McGill University Contingent (148th BN C.E.F.) COTC Names of members of the McGill COTC and those attached with records of service etc, September 1939 - March 1946, Volume VIII-A Accession 849/1 MUA.

<sup>511</sup> Senator Hugessen's son Kenneth's familiarity with Momose may have influenced his decision to vote against racial exclusion.

<sup>512</sup> Daily Orders Part II no. 42, 23 May 1942, McGill University Contingent (148th BN C.E.F.) COTC Historical Record, 1 January to 31 December 1942; Lt.-Col. R.H.E. Walker, Daily Orders Part II Order no. 38, 13 March 1946, McGill University Contingent (148th BN CEF) COTC Historical Record 1 January 1945 - 8 April 1946, volume VII Accession 849/1, MUA. Like his peers, Momose was struck off the strength due to completion of training at the end of the academic year.

<sup>513</sup> Lt-Col. J.M. Morris, Daily Orders Part II Order no. 32, 19 October 1944, McGill University Contingent (148th BN CEF) COTC Historical Record 1 January to 31 December 1944, volume VI Accession 849/1, MUA.

<sup>514</sup> Lt-Col. J.M. Morris, Daily Orders Part II Order no. 32, 26 October 1944, McGill University Contingent (148th BN CEF) COTC Historical Record 1 January to 31 December 1944, volume VI Accession 849/1, MUA.



Michel Rolph Trouillot writes that “inequalities experienced by [historical] actors lead to uneven historical power in the inscription of traces.”<sup>515</sup> Despite their presence in the official record of the Canadian Officers’ Training Corps, no trace of Shimotakahara, Watanabe, Momose, or Takeshige can be found in the digital War Records database.<sup>516</sup> According to the administrative history of the McGill University War Records Collection, “the War Records office solicited information from individuals and their families to create files concerning their participation in the war.”<sup>517</sup> None of the Japanese Canadian cadets appear to have been contacted by the office; if they offered their own files for the memorial project, those records were not included.

Having dismissed Japanese Canadian students’ fulfilment of COTC requirements, racist members of McGill’s Senate also discounted the hundreds of Japanese Canadians who served the Allies during the Second World War. Several faculty members highlighted Japanese Canadians’ war service in letters and at Senate meetings; they were consistently ignored.<sup>518</sup> Many Japanese

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<sup>515</sup> Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 48.

<sup>516</sup> McGill University Contingent (148th BN C.E.F.) COTC Names of members of the McGill COTC and those attached with records of service etc, September 1939 - March 1946, Volume VIII-A and VIII-B Accession 849/1 McGill University Archives; War Records, McGill University, <http://www.archives.mcgill.ca/public/exhibits/mcgillremembers/search.htm> (accessed 10 August, 2019).

<sup>517</sup> <http://www.archives.mcgill.ca/public/exhibits/mcgillremembers/rad.htm> (accessed 10 August, 2019).

<sup>518</sup> As described in Chapter 4, Professor LaViolette wrote to Principal James in March 1945 with an update about the two hundred Japanese Canadians then serving in military intelligence units. Acting Principal Cyrus Macmillan simply rejected LaViolette’s evidence. Letter, Forrest LaViolette to F.C. James, 3 March 1945, RG 2, Container 113, File 3036, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

Canadians, including students, had attempted to enlist, and hundreds still served in the military after the federal government exiled them from their homes and dispossessed their families.<sup>519</sup>

### **False Claims about the War Effort**

At the Senate meeting on 30 September 1943, Dean Macmillan claimed that Japanese Canadian students were unwilling to support the war effort by undertaking agricultural labour.<sup>520</sup>

In fact, roughly a thousand exiled Japanese Canadians were sent to sugar beet farms in the 1940s, undertaking, as historian Jeffrey Keshen notes, “a job so unpleasant and arduous that many German POWs refused it.”<sup>521</sup> In 1944, Japanese Canadians constituted half of the labour on Alberta and Manitoba sugar beet farms.<sup>522</sup> Many displaced university students and their

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<sup>519</sup> For a more detailed study of Japanese Canadian military service, see Ito, *We Went to War*. Exiled UBC student Minoru Yatabe still endeavoured to enlist because, “I felt that voluntary military service would be a political statement to help show that the Japanese Canadian community is truly part of the mainstream Canadian nation.” He joined up in March 1945, serving the British Intelligence Corps South-East Asia Command in India, Singapore, Malacca, and Thailand before being discharged in July 1947. *A Degree of Justice*, 183; Exiled UBC student Tomitaro Nishio interrupted his studies at the University of Western Ontario to work as an interpreter for the British Intelligence Corps. Following a stint in India, he returned to university and graduated in 1947. *A Degree of Justice*, 93; Exiled UBC student Hiroshi William Takeda served in the Canadian Army Infantry Corps from July until December 1945. *A Degree of Justice*, 155; George Yamashita’s brother, exiled UBC student Iwao Thomas Yamashita, volunteered in May 1945 to be an interpreter and war crimes investigator, serving in the Canadian 6th Division of the British Army in India and Singapore until he was discharged in September 1947. *A Degree of Justice*, 175; Exiled UBC student Reverend Shumpei Edward Yoshioka’s family observe that, “in his thirteen summertime stints as a reserve chaplain in the Armed Forces, one might see him at least in part as driven to prove himself Canadian enough.” *A Degree of Justice*, 187.

<sup>520</sup> McGill Senate Meeting Minutes, 30 September 1943, Senate Minute Book, 1943 to 1945, RG 8, Container 11, File 357, Senate, MUA.

<sup>521</sup> Jeffrey Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada’s Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003): 68.

<sup>522</sup> Oikawa, *Cartographies of Violence*, 174. For more on Japanese Canadian sugar beet farmers in Alberta, see Aya Fujiwara, “Japanese-Canadian Internally Displaced Persons: Labour Relations and Ethno-Religious Identity in Southern Alberta, 1942-1953,” *Labour/Le Travail* 69 (Spring 2012): 63-89.

families were included among them.<sup>523</sup> By the time he arrived at McGill, graduate student Kimiaki Nakashima had spent a season harvesting sugar beets and then another working as a bookkeeper for the Broder Canning Company near Lethbridge, Alberta. Nakashima's family spent years harvesting beets there; his mother Teizo describes working "down to skin and bones" for thirty cents an hour.<sup>524</sup>

Beyond the sugar beet farms, Japanese Canadian students and their families performed other underpaid agricultural labour.<sup>525</sup> Like the McGill students who volunteered for the 'harvest train' in October 1942, many of the Japanese Canadian students sent to work on farms had no agricultural background, discouraging success.<sup>526</sup> George Yamashita tried his hand at mixed

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<sup>523</sup> Exiled UBC student Chiye Alice Kudo and her family laboured for three years on a farm in southern Alberta. *A Degree of Justice*, 59; Exiled UBC student George Nishioka's family worked on a sugar beet farm in Birds Hill, Manitoba. *A Degree of Justice*, 95; Exiled UBC student Roy Oshiro worked alongside his family on an Alberta sugar beet farm for a year before being accepted into a teacher training course. Roy Oshiro, 2012, "Roy Oshiro: An Interview with a UBC Japanese Canadian Student of 1942," UBC Japanese Canadian Students of 1942. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.14288/1.0107969>; Exiled UBC student Yotaro Norman Ikebuchi and his family worked on the Gillies' sugar beet farm in Alberta. *A Degree of Justice*, 35; Exiled UBC student Robert Hideaki Hikida worked at a sugar beet farm alongside his parents and three sisters in Homewood, Manitoba before he managed to enroll at the University of Manitoba. *A Degree of Justice*, 31; Exiled UBC student Yutaka 'Coby' Kobayashi and his family laboured on a sugar beet farm in Morris, Manitoba, where they lived in a tool shed, stuffing newspaper into the cracks between the boards during winter. *A Degree of Justice*, 56; Exiled UBC student Mitsuru Sasaki injured his lower back while working on a sugar beet farm, "an ailment from which he suffered for the rest of his life. *A Degree of Justice*, 125.

<sup>524</sup> Interview with Teizo Nakashima, n.d., MG 4247, Box 24, Container 32, File 39, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal, MUA.

<sup>525</sup> See the examples of exiled UBC students working on Ontario farms in Chapter 4.

<sup>526</sup> Due to a labour shortage that fall, five hundred students were sent to help harvest wheat in western Canada. Frost notes that "not all the volunteers found farming to their liking, and it is said that some of their employers regarded their efforts with less than enthusiasm." Stanley Brice Frost, *McGill University: For the Advancement of Learning, Volume II, 1895-1971* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984): 225.

farming in Oshawa for 3 months before he moved to Montreal; he found that it proved more taxing than his previous jobs at sawmills, paper mills, and logging camps.<sup>527</sup>

While some students toiled on farms, others were sent to road camps and lumber camps.<sup>528</sup> Japanese Canadian road camp labourers were paid less than half of minimum wage because ‘enemy aliens’ were not meant to earn more money than the lowest ranking soldiers in the Canadian army. Greg Robinson notes that even German prisoners of war earned a higher hourly wage than Japanese Canadian road workers.<sup>529</sup> Japanese Canadian students’ experiences at farms, road camps, and lumber camps demonstrate that Dean Macmillan accused them of refusing to serve the war effort at a time when many were forcibly performing essential labour for artificially low wages.

### **False Claims about Security**

McGill’s racist senate members claimed that racial exclusion protected vital war research on campus. However, as the editors of the *New Canadian* argued, the continued presence of Japanese Canadian students at McGill while all students “of Japanese racial origin” were officially banned from admission undermined such arguments.<sup>530</sup> Principal James’s claims about

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<sup>527</sup> Letter from George Yamashita to Ulrike H. Hilborn, 30 January 1983, Box 1, File 1-1, ‘Viewpoints’ Article Correspondence, Japanese Canadian Commerce Students Collection, University of British Columbia Archives, Vancouver B.C.

<sup>528</sup> Exiled UBC student Hideo Frank Nikaido was sent to a lumber camp in Schreiber, Ontario. *A Degree of Justice*, 88; Exiled UBC students Roy Handa and Hiroshi Charles Kadota were forced to work at a road camp in Schreiber. *A Degree of Justice*, 24, 37; Exiled UBC student Ritsusaburo George Ide was sent to a roadcamp in Taft, B.C. *A Degree of Justice*, 33; Exiled UBC student Minoru Tabata did road work at the Tashme internment camp. *A Degree of Justice*, 150; Exiled UBC student Shigeo Frederick Onizuka was sent to a road camp near Revelstoke, B.C. where a supervisor threatened to exile him to Japan when he defended his crew’s right to take breaks. *A Degree of Justice*, 114.

<sup>529</sup> Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism*, 61. Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy*, 139.

<sup>530</sup> “Academic Bigotry,” *New Canadian*, 18 November 1944.

racial exclusion protecting vital war research contrasts with his previous position on building security.

Despite his failure to advocate for Jewish job applicants as described in Chapter 2, James did defend Jewish ‘enemy alien’ students from McGill staff members who sought to exclude them from certain buildings and even ban them from admission. In 1940, the Board of Governors passed a resolution restricting building use to registered staff and students for security reasons, making no mention of ‘race’ or nationality.<sup>531</sup> However, in October 1942, Dean Thomson complained to Principal James that Professor Otto Maass, special assistant to the director of the National Research Council, had banned Jewish refugee ‘alien’ students from the Chemistry building.<sup>532</sup>

During a meeting of the Senate Refugee Committee on 8 October, Chemistry Professor William Hatcher alleged that “enemy alien students” had misbehaved. Hatcher and Dean Macmillan hoped to follow the example of the University of Toronto Board of Governors and ban them altogether.<sup>533</sup> James pointed out that regulations were already in place to expel any misbehaving student, “whether Canadian or American or alien.” Reflecting on the ban at the University of Toronto, James even declared that, “I thought it inappropriate action for a university since we could not set ourselves up as judges over men the government had chosen to

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<sup>531</sup> “Resolutions Regarding Use of Buildings,” 8 November 1940, Board of Governors, RG 2, Container 86, File 2401, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>532</sup> Letter, D.L. Thomson to F.C. James, 6 October 1942, RG 2, Container 115, File 3094, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, MUA.

<sup>533</sup> As described in Chapter 4, the University of Toronto Board of Governors ultimately rescinded the decision to ban Jewish ‘enemy alien’ students. “Aliens Admitted.” *The Varsity*, 11 December 1942.

release.”<sup>534</sup> His willingness to judge Japanese Canadian men and women recommended by the British Columbia Security Commission reflects a sharp departure from his previous approach.

Defying Maass and Hatcher, James further asserted that they could not authorize the closure of buildings, writing in his diary,

I emphasized the fact that if the research was really important it was just as significant that Canadian and American students keep away from it as alien students, because it is highly probable that the danger of leakage of information is much greater from the large body of Canadian and American students than from the small number of alien refugees who have been pretty carefully investigated by authorities.<sup>535</sup>

James’s acknowledgment of potential leakage from Canadian and American students proved to be correct. As McGill’s Senate and Board of Governors focused their attention on perceived racial enemies, some white McGill staff members broke security protocols. Igor Gouzenko revealed in September 1945 that Raymond Boyer, a Chemistry professor and secretary of the Canadian-American RDX Committee, and Philip Durnford Smith, a physicist and assistant research engineer for the National Research Council, had passed secret documents to Russian agents. James recommended to Dean Thomson that Smith be allowed to return to McGill after serving his two-year prison sentence, showing more sympathy for a white staff member convicted of treason than he had demonstrated to the Japanese Canadian applicants recommended by British Columbia Security Commission Placement Officer G.E. Trueman.<sup>536</sup>

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<sup>534</sup> Diary of Frank Cyril James, 8 October 1942, MG 1017, Container 47, Frank Cyril James Fonds, MUA.

<sup>535</sup> Diary of Frank Cyril James, 8 October 1942, MG 1017, Container 47, Frank Cyril James Fonds, MUA.

<sup>536</sup> Frost, *McGill University*, 241-242.

## False Claims about Veterans

Oikawa describes the dialectical opposition of Japanese Canadians with the “symbolic Canadian subject.”<sup>537</sup> Racist members of the Senate and Board of Governors repeatedly contrasted Japanese Canadians with the most idealized symbolic Canadian subjects: soldiers and veterans. Ignoring the McGill’s Veterans’ Society’s opposition to racial exclusion, they claimed that Japanese Canadian students would displace returning veterans, categorically defining Japanese Canadians and veterans as mutually exclusive groups.<sup>538</sup>

As McGill’s racist senate members were bemoaning the threat Japanese Canadians posed to veterans, federal policies designed to benefit veterans displaced Japanese Canadians. McGill graduate student Kimiaki Nakashima’s mother Teizo recalls, “The train passed in front of our house and I nearly cried. But I meant to come back soon, so I didn’t suffer too much. Soon, that idea came to nothing. Our house, on government order, was given to returning veterans. When we were in Montreal, the government sent us \$5,000 for the house and the land. We used all of that for our children’s education too.”<sup>539</sup>

Japanese Canadian veterans were denied the accommodations afforded other veterans. Patricia Roy notes that, “military service gave the Japanese veterans few privileges after the war. They received no special consideration in seeking the return of their property or compensation

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<sup>537</sup> Oikawa, *Cartographies of Violence*, 10.

<sup>538</sup> The opposition of Japanese Canadians and veterans impacted students at other universities as well: exiled UBC student Hajime James Hasegawa managed to enroll at the University of Toronto but was turned away from the faculty of Dentistry because priority was given to military veterans. *A Degree of Justice*, 30; “Students Society Meets in Union Today,” *McGill Daily*, 14 November 1944.

<sup>539</sup> Interview with Teizo Nakashima, n.d. MG 4247, Container 32, Box 24, File 39, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal, MUA.

for material losses suffered as a result of the evacuation.”<sup>540</sup> Japanese Canadian veterans were ineligible to recover properties forcibly taken from their families and given to the Veterans Land Act Board.<sup>541</sup>

## A Remarkable Student Arrives

When Thomas Kunito Shoyama, President of the Japanese Canadian Citizens Association and Saskatchewan government employee, began graduate courses at McGill in 1949, he was, like hundreds of Japanese Canadians, a veteran.<sup>542</sup> In his first term, he attended Principal James’s graduate macro-economics seminar. After orchestrating McGill University’s racial exclusion policy, James finally found himself teaching its targets. As the former editor of the *New Canadian*, Shoyama had written the editorials condemning racism at McGill.<sup>543</sup>

It is unclear if James learned of Shoyama’s vocal protest, or if he ever socialized with him outside of class like his colleague, J.A. Galbraith.<sup>544</sup> Having paid close attention to events at

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<sup>540</sup> Roy, “The Soldiers Canada Didn’t Want, 356.

<sup>541</sup> Oikawa, *Cartographies of Violence*, 107.

<sup>542</sup> Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism*, 5. Shoyama would go on to hold several senior civil service positions, including Deputy Minister of Finance, Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, and Special adviser to the Privy Council on the Constitution.

<sup>543</sup> Macro-Economics Seminar List of Students, 1949, RG 2, Container 130, File 3736, Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, McGill University Archives, Montreal, Quebec; “Montreal: McGill University Bars Niseis, Manitoba Enrollment Doubled,” *New Canadian*, 28 October 1944; “McGill University Policy on Niseis Scored by CCF Leader,” *New Canadian*, 11 November 1944; “Bigotry at McGill Says U. of Toronto,” *New Canadian*, 11 November 1944; “Academic Bigotry,” *New Canadian*, 18 November 1944; “McGill Senate to Consider Student Protest on Ban,” *New Canadian*, 25 November 1944; “Students Aroused by Bigotry of McGill Exclusionist Stand,” *New Canadian*, 3 February 1945.

<sup>544</sup> On a gifted copy of B.S. Keirstead’s *The Theory of Economic Change* (Toronto: MacMillan, 1948), Galbraith wrote, “With fond memories of our McGill days, and squash games - May economic change always be in your favour.” Item number 2010.79.1.8.2. Thomas Shoyama Collection, Nikkei National Museum, Burnaby, B.C.

[http://nikkeimuseum.org/www/item\\_detail.php?art\\_id=A32311#SCROLLTO](http://nikkeimuseum.org/www/item_detail.php?art_id=A32311#SCROLLTO)



McGill, Shoyama may have understood the Principal's role in advocating for the Senate's racial exclusion policy. Perhaps he was proud to stand before the architect of racial exclusion at McGill as proof that the racist accusations levied against Japanese Canadian students never had any basis.

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