

The Politics of Racism

BCSC was established by Order-In-Council PC 1665, March 4, 1942, with Mr Austin Taylor as chair. It operated under the authority of the Federal Minister of Labour, Hon Humphrey Mitchell. With completion of the evacuation on October 31, 1942, and dissolution of BCSC by Order-In-Council PC 946 February 5, 1943, BCSC's responsibilities reverted to the Minister of Labour and Mr George Collins was designated chief executive officer with the title Commissioner of Japanese Placement, headquartered in Vancouver.

From Report on Administration of Japanese Affairs in Canada 1942-1944, August 1944 p8

In March 1942, the Dominion Government established the BC Security Commission, with headquarters in Vancouver, to administer and maintain the Tashme internment camp, as well as the well being of all of the Japanese Canadians in British Columbia during the war years. In the camp was a Supervisor who reported to the Commissioner at headquarters in Vancouver, responsible to carry out the policies of the Commission. A Placement officer, along with the Welfare agent, was responsible for maintenance cases (relief) and social welfare problems. He managed the permits for those moving east and managed the arrangements for those being repatriated to Japan in May and August 1946. Other men of the Commission were in charge of community affairs such as the general store, warehouse, woods, farm, and of parts of the office work.

From Tashme: A Japanese Relocation Centre, 1942-1946 W.J. Awmack

In each camp the inmates looked for leadership to the men who had been responsible for building that camp. At Tashme, located fourteen miles west of Hope, B.C., the leadership came from the remnants of Etsuji Morii's "national group", as the RCMP called them. Following the decline of Morii's influence in March 1942 and his departure for the self-supporting community at Minto City, the leadership of this group fell to Shieotaka Sasaki and Frank S. Shiraiichi. Along with Rev. Yoshio Ono, an Anglican minister, they co-ordinated the work force for Tashme.

The improvements negotiated by the Japanese committees did not come easily. While most camp superintendents – notably Walter Hartley at Slocan City and later Tashme, and Henry P. Loughheed at Kaslo and later New Denver – made considerable effort to improve the camps, others were not so enthusiastic. E.L. "Len" Boulton, general manager of Interior housing in 1942 and 1943, opposed improvements to the camps on the grounds that improvements made it more difficult to get Japanese Canadians to move out of B.C. as the government wished. "Every move we make to improve these facilities," Boulton complained in 1943 to George Collins, the commissioner of Japanese placement, "makes it just that much tougher on the Supervisor in getting these families moved elsewhere.... I feel that we should not provide further facilities but make them get along with what they have."

From The Politics of Racism: The Uprooting of Japanese Canadians During the Second World War by Ann Gomer Sunahara, Chapter 4