

## 5. Canadian-Japanese Mother Writes About Her Coming Internment, 1942

Dear [Brother] Wes:

We are Israelites on the move. The public is getting bloodthirsty and will have our blood Nazi-fashion. Okay we move. But where? Signs up on all highways ... JAPS KEEP OUT. Curfew. "My father is dying. May I have permission to go to his bedside?" "NO!" Like moles we burrow within after dark, and only dare to peek out of the window or else be thrown into the hoosegow with long term sentences and hard labour. Confiscation of radios, cameras, cars and trucks. Shutdown of all business. No one will buy. No agency yet set up to evaluate. When you get a notice to report to RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] for orders to move, you report or be interned. "Who will guard my wife and daughters?" Strong arm reply. Lord, if this was Germany you can expect such things as the normal way, but this is Canada, a Democracy! And the Nisei [Canadian-born citizens], repudiated by the only land they know, no redress anywhere. Sure we can move somewhere on our own, but a job? Who will feed the family? Will they hire a Jap? Where can we go that will allow us to come? The only place to go is the Camp the Government will provide when it gets around to it...

As for Eddie and us, the Bank [her husband's employer] is worried about us. At any rate, there is so much business that he has to clear up for the removees that no hakujin [white person] can do, so though we don't know for certain, he may have to stay till the last. We may stay on with him or move first to wherever we have to go, either to Camp or to some other city where there is a Branch big enough to let Ed do routine work behind the counter, but never at the counter as he is doing now.... I hope that by the time we go the twins will be big enough to stand the trip in some discomfort. But again I don't know. I may have to cart 12 bottles and 6 dozen diapers. By myself or with Ed, I don't know.... *Don't you dare come here!!!* I'll lose you for sure if you do, then where will we be? You sit tight [on the East Coast] and maybe if Ed isn't transferred, he may find a job where you are, even as a house-servant if he has to. At least we will be together. The Nisei would have been so proud to wear the King's uniform! Even die in it. But not as Helots, tied to the chariot wheels of Democracy. "Labour within or without Canada"... who knows but the 'without' may be the hot sands of Libya, hauled there as front-line ditch-diggers. And you know that most of the people here call this a 'damned shame,' this treatment especially of the Canadian-born? It's just the few antis who have railroaded Ottawa into this unfairness.... Was there ever a better excuse for them to kick us out lock stock and barrel?