

The Role of Japanese Canadians in Alberta's Beet Sugar Industry

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1. The early stage of the industry

The origins of the sugar beet industry in southern Alberta can be traced back to the agricultural ambitions of the 1890s and early 1900s, when local boosters recognized that the region's climate—characterized by hot days and cool nights—was ideal for cultivating sugar beets. The true catalyst for the industry was Jesse Knight, a wealthy Latter-day Saint mining magnate from Utah who had amassed a fortune from the Humbug Mine. Driven by religious conviction and a philanthropic desire to build a self-sustaining agricultural community, Knight purchased large tracts of land in southern Alberta and founded the settlement of Raymond in 1901.

Between 1901 and 1903, he financed and constructed the Knight Sugar Factory, Alberta's first major sugar beet processing plant. However, Knight's vision faced an immediate and chronic obstacle: sugar beet cultivation demanded intense, backbreaking manual labour. The factory required 4,000 acres of beets per season to operate viably, and early farmers consistently struggled to secure a stable workforce willing to endure the gruelling fieldwork for low wages. Initial attempts to utilize Chinese labourers were deemed unsuccessful, and while Indigenous workers from the Blood and Paigan Nations and European immigrants were employed, the labour supply remained woefully insecure.



The Knight Sugar Factory in Raymond, Albert (1901 to 903)

To alleviate this severe manpower shortage, Japanese migrants were specifically recruited to work the beet fields, arriving in southern Alberta as early as 1903 and 1905. Emigration companies, notably the Nikka Yōtatsu Kaisha, brought young Japanese men to the region to staff these agricultural enterprises, marking the beginning of the first wave of Japanese settlement on the Prairies. Initially, many of these arrivals were *dekasegi* (transient migrant workers) seeking *ikkaku senkin* (quick wealth) with the intention of eventually returning to Japan.

Tadamasa Murai states in his paper¹:

This sugar refinery closed in 1914. Whilst some returned to British Columbia as a result, around fifty people purchased undeveloped land and turned to farming, growing wheat and vegetables. For those initially settled there as farm labourers on sugar beet farms, owning their own land was the first step

towards success. And, in Raymond, being married was reportedly a precondition for acquiring land. One of the picture brides spoke about this as follows.

A man named Raymond Knight said, 'We'll give land to anyone, no matter where they're from. In return, however, you must absolutely refrain from drinking, gambling, and visiting disreputable places like brothels. If anyone gets involved in such things, we'll take the land back—that's the promise. If you agree to this, we'll build a town for you.'And as for the land—for those who wanted land to farm—it was essential to have a wife. That was the way of things back then; they felt that a single man simply couldn't manage. However, they said, 'If you have a wife, you'll be able to make do,' and so all the women who came to Raymond did so through a 'picture marriage'. Since you had to have a wife—and without one, you couldn't claim the land as your own—that's why picture marriages were common in Raymond.

Murai picked up a song that the picture brides in Raymond used to sing:

When I came here as a bride
Across the distant, distant sea
The port I reached lay at the western edge
Hundreds of miles further away
How on earth did I end up in this land of plains?

With my husband as my sole reliance
I gaze morning and evening at the waves of wheat
The golden hue that colours the ends of the earth
As I look westwards towards the setting sun
Ah, I who once called them Father and Mother

Last year's poor harvest, and this year again
The dry wind blows across the land
If only there were gold on the way home
Even the kimonos I wear have faded
Alas, I have become a poor mother

4n winter, it is thirty degrees below zero
Steam freezes on the windows
Even today, as the day draws to a close amidst the snow
The sound I hear in the stillness of the night
Is the cry of the coyote seeking food

By 1911, the Japanese population in Alberta had reached 225, representing the largest concentration of Japanese nationals in Canada east of the Pacific coast. The demographic makeup of these early bachelor camps underwent a profound transformation during the 1910s with the arrival of Japanese women, predominantly through the system of picture marriages. These women, numbering 25 across the province by 1916, endured horrific isolation and punishing physical environments—including uninsulated dwellings where winter steam froze white on the interior walls—yet their presence ensured that the transient labour camps evolved into self-reproducing, sustainable settler colonies.

2. The development of the Japanese Canadian community

Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, the Japanese Canadian community in southern Alberta shifted from wage labour toward agricultural independence. Many settlers aspired to become independent farmers

rather than perpetual labourers, purchasing farmland and adopting irrigation techniques from their Mormon neighbours. Following the dissolution of the Knight Sugar Company in 1915, unemployed Japanese workers banded together to engage in joint land leasing, and large-scale Japanese farmers, such as Yoshio Hatakenaka, emerged as agricultural innovators who even introduced steam-powered machinery.

The community simultaneously built robust social institutions to support their permanent settlement. The Raymond Japanese Association was formed in 1914 to improve social welfare, negotiate with the white community, supply agricultural labourers, and actively work to shed the "migrant worker mentality". In Hardieville, where a distinct community of Okinawan coal miners had settled, the Hardieville Comrades' Association was established in 1921 to foster mutual aid.

By 1929, the Raymond Buddhist Church was established, serving as the spiritual and educational center for the region's 300 Japanese residents. Historian Darren Aoki notes that these early settlers navigated a complex dual identity; they integrated into the Canadian prairie economy while simultaneously maintaining Japanese cultural values, language schools, and moral discipline to sustain their ethnic pride in a predominantly British Canadian society.

3. The arrival of Japanese Canadian evacuees during the Pacific War

By the late 1930s, this small pre-war community of fewer than 600 Japanese Albertans had achieved a fragile but genuine degree of social acceptance. They were increasingly viewed as reliable, industrious, and "good neighbours," a tolerance partly fostered by the shared historical marginalization of the local Mormon population. However, this stability was shattered by the outbreak of the Pacific War following the attack on Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941. The federal government swiftly designated Japanese Canadians as "enemy aliens" and ordered the forced removal of approximately 22,000 individuals from the 100-mile protected zone along the British Columbia coast.

Concurrently, Alberta's sugar beet industry was on the brink of collapse. The onset of the war had depleted the local workforce, and Eastern European labourers were actively striking to demand a wage of \$9 per acre and the right to collective bargaining. Recognizing an opportunity to solve their desperate labour crisis, the Alberta Sugar Beet Growers Association aggressively lobbied the federal government to redirect Japanese evacuees from British Columbia to the Prairie beet farms.

The resulting political arrangement was strictly utilitarian and heavily racialized. The British Columbia Security Commission (BCSC) formalized a contract with the Alberta provincial government in May 1942, stipulating that Japanese evacuees would be completely controlled, tied exclusively to beet farm labour, restricted from residing in urban centers like Lethbridge, and unequivocally removed from the province six months after the cessation of hostilities. Local white residents, municipalities, and veterans' groups vehemently opposed the influx, fearing the permanent settlement of "enemy aliens" and demanding strict military surveillance.

In the 1940s, Alberta had two operating sugar beet refineries: the Picture Butte refinery (opened in 1936) and the Raymond refinery (reopened during WWII). Both played major roles in processing beets grown by Japanese Canadian labourers relocated under the 1942 Sugar Beet Program. The Picture Butte Sugar Beet Refinery opened in 1936 by Canadian Sugar Factories (a subsidiary of BC Sugar) and continued operating until 1954. This plant became the primary refinery in Alberta during WWII, processing sugar beets grown in the Lethbridge-Picture Butte region.

The Raymond (Knight) Sugar Factory was built in 1901-1903 and closed in 1914 due to poor yields and competition, but it was repurposed for beet processing on a limited basis during WWII to meet wartime sugar demand.

The Taber Sugar Beet Factory, the only refinery operating in Canada now, did not open until 1950, and therefore, it was not part of the 1940s landscape.

Between April and June 1942, roughly 2,250 Japanese Canadians (comprising about 370 families) were transported to southern Alberta, with the total wartime influx eventually reaching between 3,000 and 4,000 individuals. For the evacuees, accepting farm labour was often the only viable alternative to being separated into male-only road camps or isolated internment centers; it was a choice made strictly for family survival.

The Japanese Canadian Sugar Beet Program was initiated in March 1942, and the Japanese Canadian families on the BC coast started arriving in southern Alberta in April. The first contingent of Japanese evacuees from Mission, B.C., arrived in the Coalhurst-Diamond City region. The second group, consisting of 22 families totalling 124 persons, arrived from Whonnack, B.C. (Whonnack is a small rural community in the District of Maple Ridge, located on the north side of the Fraser River in southwestern British Columbia), and took up residence in Picture Butte. The third group, comprising some 73 persons from ten families in Steveston, arrived in Coaldale. The fourth group of 23 families from New Westminster was dispatched to the Raymond-Magrath district. By the first week of June, 21 groups had arrived, bringing the total number of Japanese brought into southern Alberta from B.C. to approximately 2,250 or about 370 families². Most of the Japanese Canadian families from the Fraser River Valley were engaged in agriculture. But those from Steveston were fishermen's families.

The nature of the work on these sugar beet farms was intensely physical, low-paid, and profoundly exhausting. Because modern herbicides and automated machinery did not yet exist, Japanese Canadians performed nearly every essential agricultural task by hand. The agricultural cycle began in the spring with thinning, the most notoriously labour-intensive task of the season. Workers were forced to stoop or crawl along endless rows of crops under the hot Prairie sun, using precision and speed to manually uproot excess seedlings, leaving exactly one healthy plant every 20 to 30 centimetres.

Throughout the summer, the families were responsible for continuous weeding and irrigation. This involved hand-pulling weeds, hoeing hard soil for hours each day, and physically managing irrigation systems by opening and closing water gates, repairing ditch breaks, and directing water flow through furrows to prevent flooding of the crop. The autumn harvest demanded unimaginable endurance. Workers had to loosen the earth with a hook or fork, manually pull each heavy beet from the soil, slice off the leafy tops with a knife, and physically heave the harvested beets onto transport wagons. Finally, they sorted the beets by hand to remove dirt and debris before loading them for the factory. Because farm compensation was calculated by the acre rather than an hourly wage, the financial survival of the household dictated that every family member, frequently including children as young as ten years old, had to work in the fields from dawn until dusk.

Compounding this backbreaking physical exploitation were the horrific living conditions the evacuees were forced to endure. Arriving from the coast, families were shocked to find that farmers had provided only rudimentary, makeshift shelters. Evacuees were housed in converted chicken coops, pigsties, grain sheds, and uninsulated bunkhouses. These structures offered no protection against Alberta's brutal winters, where temperatures frequently plummeted to minus 30 or 40 degrees. Basic infrastructure was virtually nonexistent; families lacked reliable access to clean water, often relying on muddy, highly alkaline ponds, and lived in deep rural isolation far from vital medical care.

Consequently, an estimated 42% of evacuee families could not earn enough during the growing season to survive the winter and were forced to depend on government relief funds. Throughout this crisis, the pre-war "old-timer" Japanese Canadians who had lived in Raymond and Hardieville for decades stepped up as crucial cultural brokers and community leaders. Bilingual leaders like Yoichi Hironaka and T. Maruno worked tirelessly to mediate disputes between abusive farmers and traumatized evacuees,

secure lumber for housing repairs, negotiate with the RCMP, and reassure hostile white municipalities of the community's peaceful intentions, ultimately preventing the social fragmentation of the new arrivals.

4. The transformation of the Japanese Canadian community after the war

The cessation of World War II in 1945 initiated a complex era of reintegration and profound transformation for the agriculture of Japanese Canadians in Alberta. The federal government did not immediately restore civil liberties; instead, it enacted a dispersal policy, demanding that Japanese Canadians either relocate east of the Rocky Mountains or accept "repatriation" to Japan. While 43% of Japanese Canadians nationally signed repatriation forms under duress, in Alberta, a striking anomaly occurred: only 15.4% opted for repatriation. This means that, of the 790 Japanese nationals living in Alberta, 176 signed the application to return to Japan, whilst of the 432 who were Canadian citizens, 46 did so. Ultimately, however, only nine people actually 'returned' to Japan from Alberta on the government's repatriation ship³.

The robust support networks forged by the pre-war settlers, combined with a collective desire to avoid further uprooting and the province's slowly stabilizing economic opportunities, convinced the vast majority of the evacuees to make southern Alberta their permanent home. Banned from returning to the British Columbia coast until April 1949, many families had no choice but to stay, while others stayed because they had successfully planted deep community roots.

The post-war decades marked a dramatic upward shift in the agricultural and social status of Japanese Canadians in the province. With the restoration of their provincial voting rights in 1948 and the lifting of wartime restrictions, the community's demographic profile diversified. While some younger, Canadian-born Nisei pursued their higher educational aspirations by entering urban professions, trades, and civil service, many families chose to remain in the region. Some became tenant farmers and later landowners. They began diversifying beyond sugar beets, adding potatoes, alfalfa, mixed vegetables, grains, and small livestock. Potatoes were particularly attractive because they required intensive hand labour, which the Japanese Canadian families were already accustomed to from sugar beet farming, provided stable local markets, and allowed them to build capital toward land ownership. In the period from the 1950s to the 1970s, the Japanese Canadian farmers in the Coaldale-Raymond-Taber corridor were known for their careful field management and consistent yields, and became valued contract growers for local packing sheds, seed potato suppliers and regional distributors.

Over the last 20 years, southern Alberta's potato industry has expanded dramatically—driven by processor investment, acreage growth, and rising yields—transforming the region into Canada's leading potato-producing area. The biggest driver of change has been the arrival and expansion of major processors in southern Alberta, such as McCain Foods, Cavendish Farms, Lamb Weston, Old Dutch, PepsiCo, and Shearer Foods. Now, over 73 percent of Alberta's potato acres are grown for processing potato fries and chips.

Potato farming has also significantly changed. Now, it comprises larger, more capital-intensive farms that are engaged in contract-based production, have higher storage capacity and controlled-environment facilities, and practise precision irrigation and soil-health monitoring. Small potato farms are gone. There are a few Japanese Canadian potato farms in southern Alberta. Now, Miyagawa Fram Ltd. is a large Japanese Canadian potato firm in southern Alberta⁴.

Sugar beet farming underwent a massive technological modernization that permanently eliminated the agonizing manual labour endured by the Issei and Nisei generations. Precision seeders and genetically superior seed varieties replaced the gruelling necessity of hand-thinning; chemical herbicides and camera-guided mechanical cultivators eradicated the need for manual weeding; automated pivot sprinklers replaced ditch irrigation; and massive self-propelled mechanical harvesters allowed one or

two operators to lift, top, clean, and load acres of beets per hour—a task that once required the desperate labour of entire extended families.

Today, the legacy of Japanese Canadian labour and resilience remains deeply interwoven with the industry's survival. Alberta stands as the only province in Canada that continues to cultivate sugar beets on a commercial scale, with the modernized Taber refinery processing 100% of the nation's domestic beet sugar.



Harvesting sugar beets in southern Alberta (2024)



The Lantic Sugar factory in Taber, Alta., is a busy place in October as growers' sugar beet harvest is delivered to its door.

The Lantic Sugar Factory in Taber, Alberta (2024)

Footnotes:

1. 村井忠政、「南アルバータ日系人社会の生成と発展（上）」(Tadamasa, Murai, *The Establishment and Development of the Japanese Canadian Community in Southern Alberta*, Volume I), PP 346 – 348
2. David Iwaasa, *The Japanese in Southern Alberta 1941-45*, PP 11
3. Department of Labour of Canada (1947), *Repatriation Report*, Appendix B: Provincial Breakdown
4. The story of Miyanaga Firms

The story of Miyanaga Farm in Taber, southern Alberta, is one of resilience, hard work, and the quiet strength that has long characterized the Japanese Canadian community. The Miyanaga family first arrived in Alberta during the difficult years of the Second World War, after being forcibly removed from their home in British Columbia. Like many other Japanese Canadian families, they lost their property and were sent inland with almost nothing. Their new life began on a sugar beet farm, where the work was harsh, and the conditions were uncertain.

After the war ended, the Miyanaga family chose to remain in southern Alberta and rebuild their lives from the ground up. They began farming on a single acre of rented land, relying on family labour, determination, and the skills they had developed through years of agricultural work. Over time, they expanded their acreage, improved their equipment, and gradually established themselves as reliable growers in the region.

As the potato industry in southern Alberta grew, the Miyanagas adapted, shifting their focus to potato processing—an area that required careful irrigation, storage management, and long-term contracts with major food companies. Through steady effort over several generations, the family built what is now known as Miyanaga Farms Ltd, a respected supplier of potatoes for large processors in the Taber area. Their farm is recognized within Alberta's potato sector, and their story has been featured in industry histories and documentary videos highlighting the contributions of local growers.

Today, Miyanaga Farm stands as a symbol of how Japanese Canadian families rebuilt their lives after wartime displacement. From one acre of rented land to a successful multi-generation farming operation, the Miyanaga family's journey reflects both the hardships and the remarkable perseverance of the Nikkei community in southern Alberta. Their legacy continues to inspire, reminding us of the strength that comes from family, community, and the determination to begin again.

5. References for the history of Japanese Canadians in southern Albert

5.1 Tadamasa Murai, 'The Formation and Development of the Japanese Community in Southern Alberta (Parts 1 and 2)', Nagoya University of Private Studies Academic Repository

Tadamasa Murai's research elucidates the formation of the Japanese community in Southern Alberta from the pre-war period through the war years by comparing it with the Japanese community in British Columbia. Southern Alberta, centred on Raymond, Hardyville and Coaldale, was a region where Japanese immigrants settled from the early 20th century onwards, and Murai provides a multifaceted analysis of its social structure, economic activities, religious organisations, family formation and relations with the local community.

Firstly, in 'Part 1', he demonstrates that the origins of the Japanese community in Southern Alberta lie with the early immigrants who came to Canada as railway construction workers and coal miners. Many of these were young men from rural Japan, particularly Kyushu and Okinawa, who came for seasonal work or to earn money away from home. Whilst anti-Japanese sentiment was strong along the coast of British Columbia, where Japanese Canadians working in the fishing and timber industries faced institutional discrimination, such sentiment was comparatively weaker in Alberta, leaving room for them to be accepted as a labour force. This difference formed the backdrop to the establishment of a distinct Japanese community in Southern Alberta.

Murai focuses on the concentration of Okinawan immigrants at the Hardyville coal mine, detailing how they put down roots in the local community through coal mining work and subsequently transitioned into agriculture. The Okinawan immigrants formed a mutual-aid community and utilized kinship and hometown networks to attract new settlers. Consequently, the Japanese community in Southern Alberta developed a character that was more close-knit and mutually supportive, differing from the large-scale, multi-layered communities found in British Columbia.

The shift to agriculture marked a significant turning point in the development of the Japanese community in Southern Alberta. To avoid the instability and dangers of coal mining, many Japanese Canadians moved into tenant farming or small-scale agriculture, with sugar beet cultivation becoming their primary livelihood. As beet farming was labour-intensive and required family labour, it was well suited to the Japanese-Alberta community's culture of diligence and family cooperation. Murai carefully analyzes how Japanese Albertans contributed to the local economy through beet farming and gradually became independent farmers by acquiring farmland.

In 'Part 2', the formation of religious, educational and social organizations is discussed. The establishment of the Raymond Buddhist Temple became the spiritual pillar of the South Alberta Japanese community, strengthening community cohesion through ceremonies and cultural events. Furthermore, regarding the education of Japanese Canadian children, whilst English education was prioritized, there was a clear effort to maintain cultural identity through Japanese language schools and home schooling.

Murai also analyses the impact of the Great Depression of the 1930s on the South Alberta Japanese community. Although falling agricultural prices and job insecurity were severe, the Japanese community overcame the crisis through family labour and frugality and indeed enhanced their standing within the

local community. Murai points out that these efforts influenced the community's receptiveness during the subsequent wartime period.

Regarding wartime forced relocation, Murai emphasizes that Southern Alberta became a host region for migrants from British Columbia. The presence of an established Japanese Canadian community meant that Japanese Canadians who moved there from 1942 onwards were able to receive a degree of support; however, they were also, at the same time, exploited as labourers in the beet farming industry. Murai touches upon the tensions and class divisions that arose between pre-war settlers and wartime migrants, thereby depicting the complex structure of the Japanese Canadian community in Southern Alberta.

Overall, Murai's research clearly demonstrates that the Japanese Canadian community in Southern Alberta was not merely a 'receptacle for wartime migration', but had been established as a local community with its own distinct history and culture since before the war. His analysis highlights the importance of Southern Alberta, which has often been overlooked in the history of Japanese Canadians, and makes a significant contribution to regional history, immigration history and ethnicity studies.

5.2 David B. Iwaasa, "The Japanese in southern Alberta 1941-45," *Alberta History, Summer 1976, Volume 24, Number 3*

David Iwaasa's study traces the evolution of the Japanese Canadian community in southern Alberta from its small prewar beginnings to its dramatic expansion during the Second World War. Before 1941, fewer than 600 Japanese Canadians lived in Alberta, concentrated mainly in Raymond and Hardieville. These early settlers, arriving between 1900 and the early 1920s, worked in agriculture and mining and gradually earned a measure of social acceptance. By the late 1930s, stable families, bilingual children, and cooperative relationships—especially with Mormon farmers in Raymond—helped integrate the community into local society.

The attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941 disrupted this fragile acceptance. Although Japanese Canadians publicly affirmed their loyalty—Raymond leader Yoichi Hironaka declared, "This is our home. We are behind Canada one hundred percent." Fear and suspicion spread across the province. At the same time, Alberta faced a severe agricultural labour shortage. When the federal government ordered the removal of all Japanese Canadians from the British Columbia coast in 1942, Alberta beet growers actively requested evacuees to fill labour gaps. Their support, however, was conditional: growers insisted on strict federal supervision and assurances that evacuees would leave after the war.

Between April and June 1942, about 2,250 evacuees—roughly 370 families—arrived in southern Alberta. Many were housed in makeshift shelters with poor water and limited medical care. Beet farming required multiple workers per household, and many families struggled to survive the winter, with 42% relying on relief. Municipalities imposed mobility restrictions, and towns such as Lethbridge attempted to bar evacuees from public facilities.

Long-established Japanese Canadian families in Raymond and Hardieville played a crucial mediating role, helping newcomers navigate local tensions. After the war, federal dispersal and deportation policies threatened the community, but Alberta's repatriation rate was low. By 1948, Japanese Canadians had gained provincial voting rights, and in the following decades, they became active contributors to Alberta's civic and cultural life, even as assimilation raised concerns about cultural loss.

5.3 Ann Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism, Chapter 4: Exile*

Japanese Canadians were removed from the Pacific Coast in 1942 and sent into exile through a system of special trains that "left Vancouver fully loaded" and returned empty, carrying men first to road camps in B.C., Alberta, and Ontario, and later moving entire families into the Interior or to Prairie sugar beet

farms. The sugar beet scheme arose from a severe labour shortage in Alberta and Manitoba, where 44 percent of pre-war farm labour had vanished, and Prairie growers viewed the Fraser Valley Japanese as ideal, controllable workers. Despite fierce local opposition—rooted in racism, wartime hysteria, and comparisons to the “Hutterite problem”—over 3,600 Japanese Canadians from the Fraser Valley volunteered for beet work to avoid family separation, believing their exile would be temporary.

Their arrival, however, was traumatic: families were arbitrarily selected by farmers, and many were forced to live in “old, uninsulated granaries and chicken coops,” enduring harsh conditions, alkaline water, and exploitative employers. Economic hardship deepened through the winter of 1942–43, with 90 percent of Alberta’s uprooted Japanese in dire straits and 42 percent on relief. In both Alberta and Manitoba, Japanese Canadians secretly organized themselves despite bans on assembly, forming committees such as the Manitoba Japanese Joint Committee and Alberta’s Shogo Endo Kai to negotiate better contracts, school access, and mobility rights.

Meanwhile, Japanese Albertans—long-settled residents—opened their homes and churches to the newcomers but were themselves punished when Ottawa extended all restrictions to “persons of the Japanese race,” including travel limits, censorship, and bans on property sales. In Manitoba, support from civic leaders, the YWCA, YMCA, and Jewish community eased integration.

5.4 Mitsuru Shimpō, *As If Chased by Stones*, Chapter 6, Section D (Tokyo, Ochanō Mizu Publishing, Second Edition, 1996), Translated by Takashi Ohki and available at japanesecanadians.ca

This section provides stories of the Japanese Canadians on the sugar beet farms during World War II and after in southern Alberta that Mr. Shimpō gathered and are unique. Mr. Shimpō explained why the Japanese Canadians could stay in Alberta after the war.

Around 1945, the labour composition of the sugar beet farmers was 65% Japanese Canadians, 18% German POWs, and 17% others. When the war ended, German POWs were taken to England. Returning soldiers from Europe said, “I’ve nothing to do with sugar beets.” Other people also moved on to other industries. In the end, only Japanese Canadians remained at the sugar beet farms in South Alberta. The SBGA petitioned the provincial government to allow the Japanese Canadians to stay in Alberta. The Social Credit Party, backed by the farmers’ vote in Southern Alberta and born out of the Christian movement among Southern Albertans in the 1930s, was similar to the Komei Party in Japan, and the government could not ignore it. Thus, the Japanese Canadians were allowed to settle in Alberta after the war.

Mr. Shimpō included a memoir by Fumiko Nagata that vividly described the life of a Japanese Canadian family on a sugar beet farm (See “As If Chased by Stones” on the home page of this website).