WHO BROKE THE PROMISE? Large-scale injustice requires many hands

People made dispossession happen. Politicians signed it into law. Senior officials decided the details. Local agents put policy into practice.

Imagine warehouses of furniture, clothing, musical instruments, and books. The Custodian of Enemy Property, a federal office, controlled everything Japanese Canadians were forced to leave behind. By 1942, 120 employees worked in Vancouver's Royal Bank Building, filing documents and cataloguing belongings.

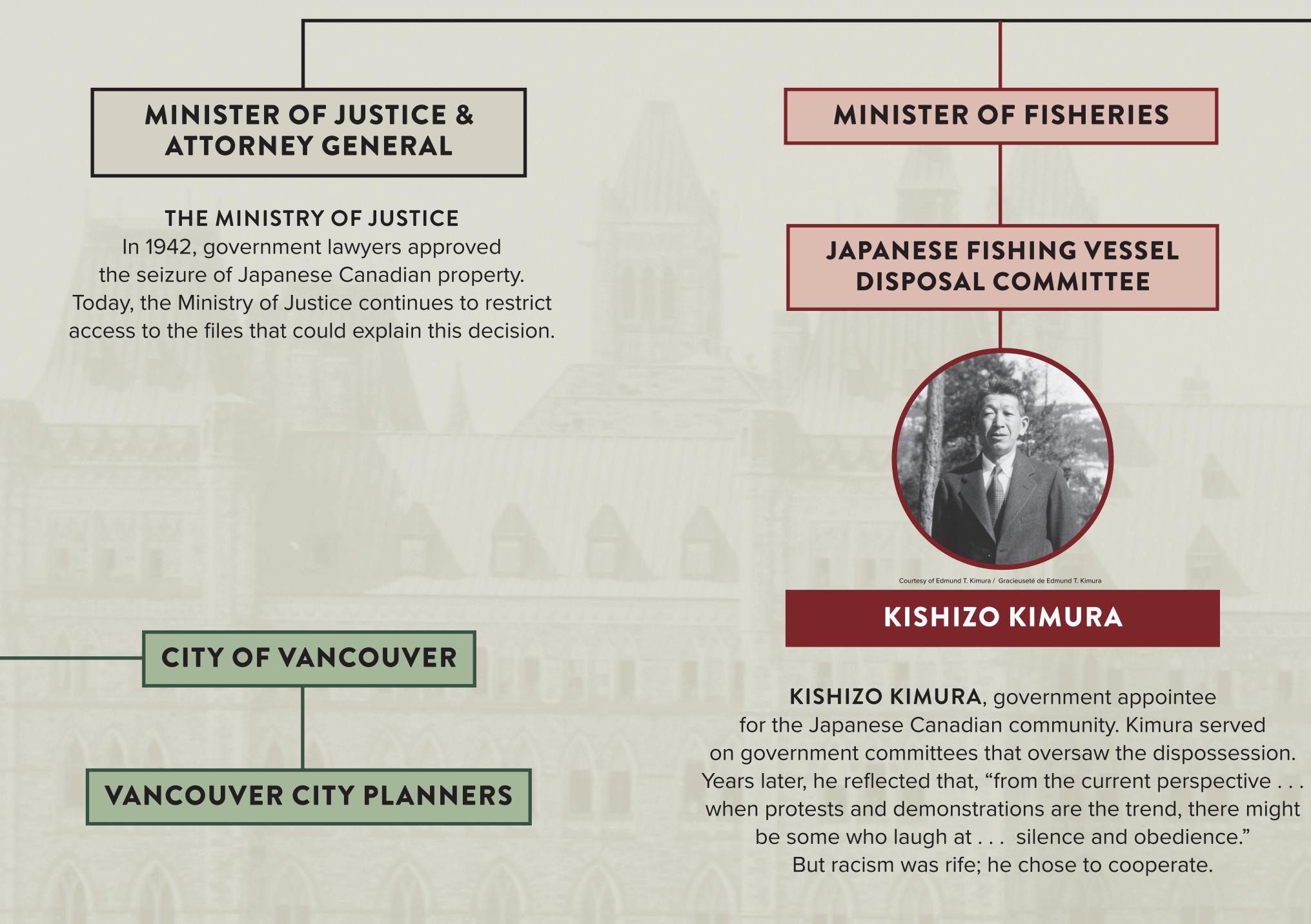
Real estate agents inspected houses. Government workers priced farms. Auctioneers chanted bids to thousands of eager buyers.

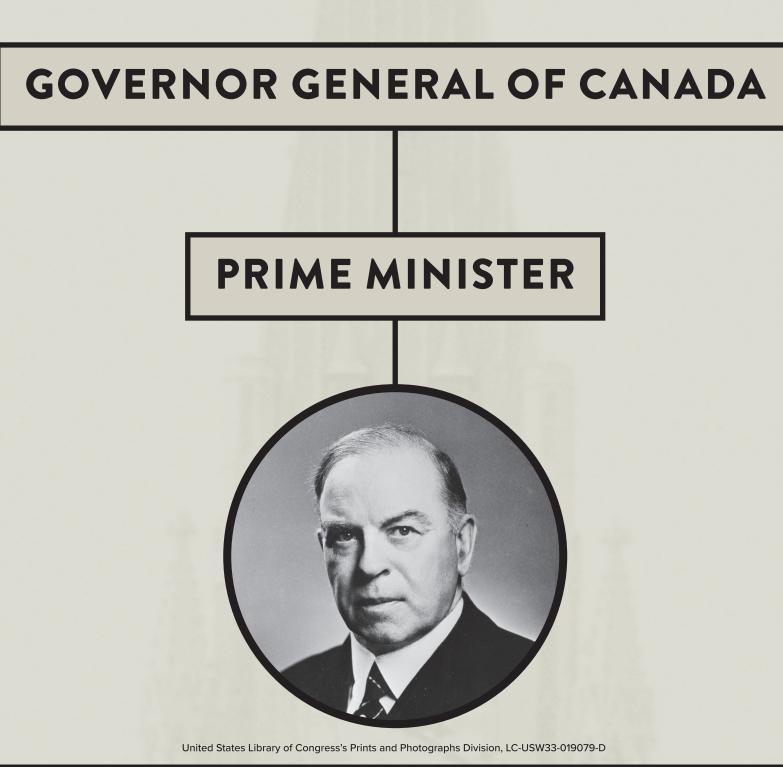
WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR DISPOSSESSION?

The policy targeted all "persons of the Japanese race." Yet, each policy maker had their own motives and ideas.

EXPLORE THIS CHART to learn

who was responsible for the policies.





WILLIAM LYON MACKENZIE KING

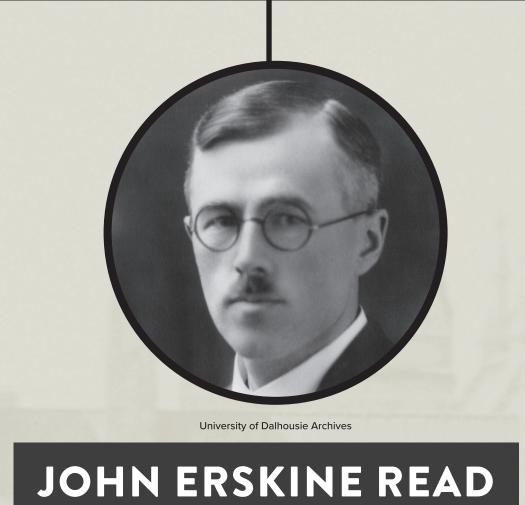
WILLIAM LYON MACKENZIE KING, war-time prime minister of Canada Publicly, King said that no Japanese Canadians had shown disloyalty. Privately, he distrusted them. "No matter how honourable they might appear to be," he wrote in 1941, "every one of them...would be saboteurs and would help Japan when the moment came."

> PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE Assistant Private Secretary

CABINET COMMITTEES

Cabinet Committee on Japanese Questions (Est. 1942) Cabinet Committee on Repatriation and Relocation (Est. 1945) Cabinet Commitee on Japanese Problems (Est. 1946)

SECRETARY FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS



JOHN ERSKINE READ, federal government lawyer Read objected to the dispossession: "The taking of the property away from these men has nothing whatever to do with security." He felt that the government was "abandoning completely the principle . . . of fairness." But with his career still on the rise, he carried on.

CITY **REAL ESTATE**

City of Vancouver officials saw an opportunity when the internment began: the historic Japanese Canadian eighbourhood on Powell Street could be demolished and replaced with modern housing. This plan helped to convince the federal government to sell. But the proposed redevelopment never happened.

FISHING VESSELS

In January 1942, the government formed a committee to encourage fishers to sell or lease their vessels. When some Japanese Canadians refused to sell, the Committee forced them. Years later, government lawyers publicly admitted that the sales were illegal, but buried the issue.

PRIVY COUNCIL Clerk of the privy council

CABINET

QUI A BRISÉ LA PROMESSE? L'injustice à grande échelle nécessite plusieurs acteurs

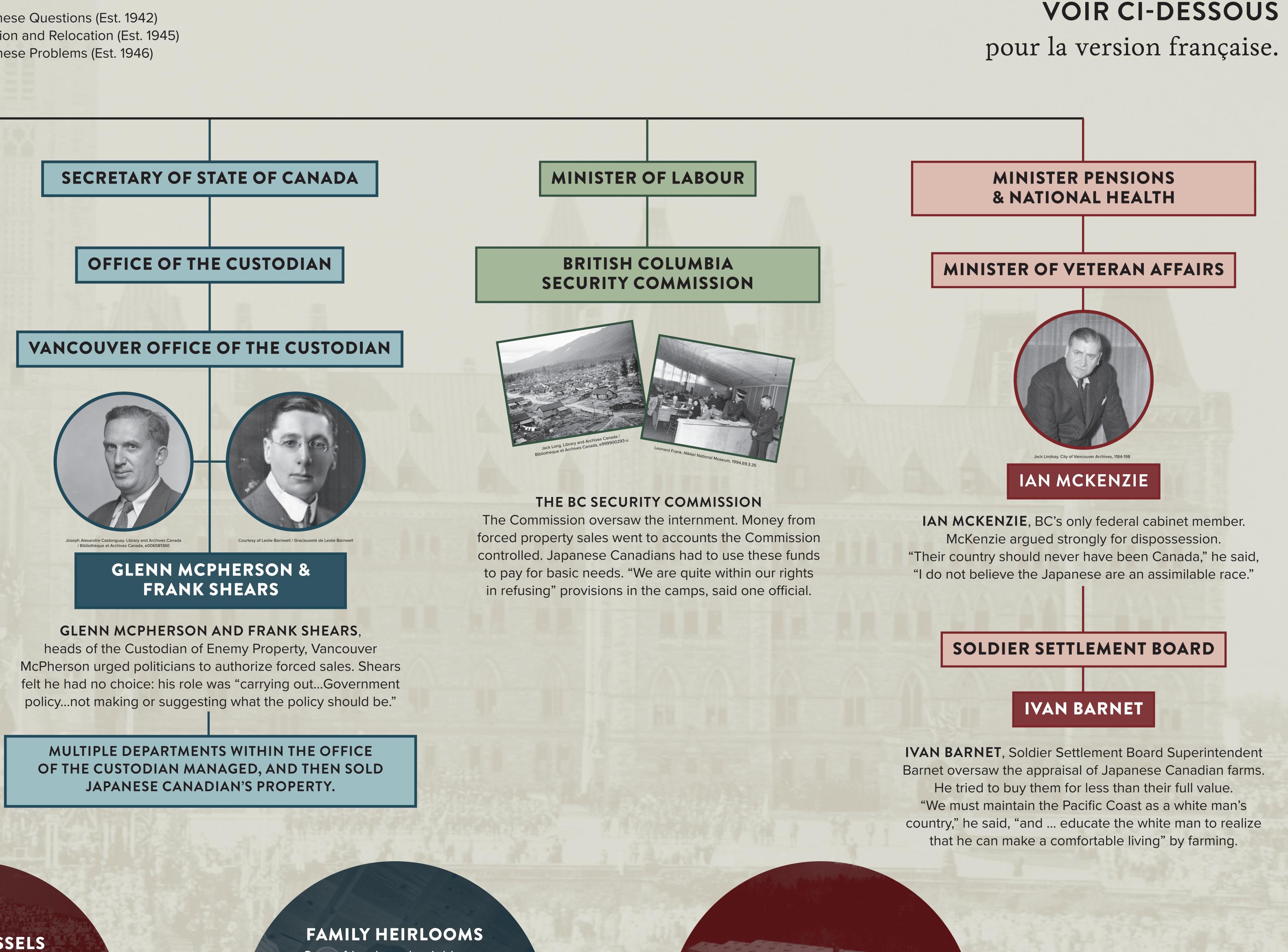
Les gens ont fait de la dépossession une réalité. Les politiciens en ont fait des lois. Les hauts fonctionnaires ont décidé des détails. Les agents locaux ont mis la politique en pratique.

Imaginez des entrepôts de meubles, de vêtements, d'instruments de musique et de livres. Le Bureau du séquestre des biens ennemis, un bureau fédéral, contrôlait tout ce que les Canadiens japonais étaient obligés de laisser derrière eux. En 1942, 120 employés travaillaient dans l'édifice de la Banque Royale à Vancouver, classant des documents et cataloguant des biens.

Les agents immobiliers ont inspecté les maisons. Les fonctionnaires ont établi le prix des fermes. Les encanteurs ont scandé des offres à des milliers d'acheteurs désireux.

QUI ÉTAIT RESPONSABLE DE LA DÉPOSSESSION ?

La politique visait toutes les « personnes de race japonaise ». Pourtant, chaque décideur avait ses propres motivations et idées.



Some friends and neighbours saved the personal belongings of Japanese Canadians, returning them when they could. Most, however, looted and stole. Rather than stop the looting, the government decided to sell what remained. Between 1943 and 1946, it held 255 auctions and sold over 90,000 belongings.

FARMS

Most Japanese Canadian farms were sold to the Director of the Veterans' Land Act in 1944. These 769 farmlands were deliberately underpriced by officials. They wanted the lands to benefit soldiers returning from war.