

## Shaw, Judy E AEIT:EX

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**From:** Meadows, Jennifer L AEIT:EX  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 5, 2012 2:02 PM  
**To:** Ives, Andrew AEIT:EX  
**Cc:** Sharma, Rishi; Fleites Toris, Angela AEIT:EX; Lo, Fiera AEIT:EX; Berkes, Andrea AEIT:EX  
**Subject:** FW: Acknowledging BC's Racist Past - 2nd follow-up  
**Attachments:** Redress Framework BC GovtMay2012.doc; letter to Premier Christy Clark.doc; Ming Pao July 31 2012 .doc

Hi Andrew

Given the nature of the incoming email appears to be more tax policy related this would not be dealt with by our Ministry. I would suggest that perhaps you could follow-up with the Premier's Office to confirm if the original incoming was CLIFFed and which Ministry it was directed to and follow-up with your colleagues at Finance as it appears to be more of a Finance issue (tax policy).

Thanks  
Jennifer

---

**From:** Minister, AEIT AEIT:EX  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 5, 2012 9:30 AM  
**To:** Meadows, Jennifer L AEIT:EX  
**Cc:** Berkes, Andrea AEIT:EX  
**Subject:** FW: Acknowledging BC's Racist Past - 2nd follow-up

Hi there He e-mailed again, And well Rishi would probably say to send this to you, so here it is again, along with all the attachments.

*Kim Coombes, Office Assistant  
Office of the Honourable John Yap  
Minister of Advanced Education,  
Innovation and Technology  
and Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism  
PO Box 9080 Victoria, BC V8W 9E2  
Ph: 250-356-0179 / Fax: 250-952-0260*

---

**From:** Yap.MLA, John [<mailto:John.Yap.MLA@leg.bc.ca>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 5, 2012 9:22 AM  
**To:** Minister, AEIT AEIT:EX  
**Cc:** Ng, PoWah LASS:EX  
**Subject:** FW: Acknowledging BC's Racist Past - 2nd follow-up

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**From:** CCNC National [<mailto:national@ccnc.ca>]

**Sent:** December-04-12 3:03 PM

**To:** OfficeofthePremier, Office PREM:EX

**Cc:** Lee.MLA, Richard; Lee, Richard; Yap.MLA, John; Chong.MLA, Ida; Dix.MLA, Adrian; Kwan, Jenny (Office); Elmore.MLA, Mable

**Subject:** FW: Acknowledging BC's Racist Past - 2nd follow-up

Dear Premier Clark:

I am writing on behalf of the Chinese Canadian National Council (CCNC) to issue our second follow-up on our letter of May 29th. Despite assurance from your office, we have not yet received any response from your Government.

At CCNC, we have compiled the figures relating to the BC portion of the head taxes collected between 1885 and 1924, and confirm that it was around \$8.5 million, **a sum worth about \$1 billion today.**

Our position is that the Province of BC needs to return a meaningful, symbolic amount to the head tax families. We also believe that this matter can be resolved quickly in a just and honourable manner and we are available to meet with you and your officials to iron out the details of a positive resolution of this issue. Could you please instruct your office to contact us at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Victor Wong  
Executive Director  
416-977-9871

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**From:** CCNC National [<mailto:national@ccnc.ca>]

**Sent:** September-14-12 3:35 PM

**To:** 'premier@gov.bc.ca'

**Cc:** 'Lee.MLA, Richard'; 'RLee@leg.bc.ca'; 'john.yap.mla@leg.bc.ca'; 'ida.chong.mla@leg.bc.ca'; 'adrian.dix.mla@leg.bc.ca'; 'jenny.kwan.mla@leg.bc.ca'; 'mable.elmore.mla@leg.bc.ca'

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**Subject:** Acknowledging BC's Racist Past

May 29, 2012

Hon. Christy Clark  
Province of British Columbia  
West Annex  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

**E-mail:** [premier@gov.bc.ca](mailto:premier@gov.bc.ca)

Dear Premier Christy Clark:

RE: Acknowledging BC's Racist Past

I am writing on behalf of the Chinese Canadian National Council (CCNC) to raise the issue of redress of the Head Tax and *Chinese Exclusion Act*. As you may know, about 82,000 Chinese paid \$23 million in head tax levies from 1885 to 1923, a sum worth over \$2 billion today. A portion of these levies about \$8.5 million was distributed to the BC Government (a sum worth about \$1 billion today). For three decades, CCNC and the head tax families sought a just and honourable resolution.

On June 22, 2006, Prime Minister Stephen Harper rose in the House of Commons to offer a Parliamentary Apology and to announce \$20,000 in ex-gratia payments to living head tax payers and surviving spouses and a community education fund. About 785 head tax families were eligible and received this payment. This gesture of symbolic redress was meaningful and an important first step towards reconciliation.

However, the Head Tax and *Chinese Exclusion Act* redress issue has not been fully resolved. There is a need for the BC Government to also make amends with the head tax families.

BC was the province where the racist legislation was initiated. There were various attempts to enact a head tax in BC but such laws passed by the provincial legislature were declared *ultra-vires* by the courts. The federal Government enacted the Head Tax in 1885 with the support of BC political leaders. In 1923, a Member of Parliament from New Westminster moved the *Chinese Exclusion Act* to prohibit further Chinese immigration. This vicious legislation served to separate families and drastically reduce family formation in Canada until it was repealed in 1947. Interestingly, the City of New Westminster recently acknowledged its racist past and apologized to the Chinese Canadian community.

In our view, the BC Government needs to be part of this solution. In 1900 and 1903, there were changes to the *Chinese Immigration Act* to allow the BC Government to receive at first one-quarter and then one-half of the head tax levies collected. An estimated \$8.5 million was sent to BC from the federal Government, a sizeable sum in those days. In fact, the head tax levies made up 10% of the provincial budget in some years.

In 1992, the BC Legislature passed a unanimous resolution to support Chinese head tax redress. We note the themes of reconciliation and strengthening of families in your vision for your Government. Reconciliation is about acknowledging our mistakes, making amends and restoring dignity to the head tax families.

The BC Government should not be seen to be profiting from racism.

There is no legal impediment for the BC Government **to return the head tax levies to the head tax families**. We specifically seek direct redress based on a one certificate - one payment basis and we have various workable mechanisms that we could discuss further with you and your officials. We estimate that there are 3,000 head tax families still seeking redress and this figure does not include the 785 families that have already received the \$20,000 payment.

We are available to meet with you and your officials to iron out the details of a positive resolution of this issue.

Sincerely,

Victor Wong  
Executive Director

Cc  
Mr. Adrian Dix  
Hon. Ida Chong  
Hon. Richard Lee  
Hon. John Yap  
Ms. Mable Elmore  
Hon. Jenny Kwan

\*\*\*\*\*

Victor Wong  
CCNC Executive Director  
[national@ccnc.ca](mailto:national@ccnc.ca)  
(416) 977-9871 (tel)  
CCNC: [www.ccnc.ca](http://www.ccnc.ca)  
Not Too Asian: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/nottooasian/>

## Shaw, Judy E AEIT:EX

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**From:** Meadows, Jennifer L AEIT:EX  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 4, 2012 4:29 PM  
**To:** Minty, Dawn M AEIT:EX  
**Cc:** Cook, Jeannette AEIT:EX  
**Subject:** FW: Acknowledging BC's Racist Past - 2nd follow-up  
**Attachments:** Redress Framework BC GovtMay2012.doc; letter to Premier Christy Clark.doc; Ming Pao July 31 2012 .doc

Hi Dawn,

Seeking your advice on this one. As this does seem to be tax related I'm wondering if this should be redirected to Ministry of Finance.

I should note that MJY and MLA Lee will be meeting this Friday to discuss Chinese apology which would be related to this.

Your thoughts on this would be appreciated.

Thank you.  
Jennifer

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**From:** Coombes, Kim AEIT:EX  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 4, 2012 4:24 PM  
**To:** Meadows, Jennifer L AEIT:EX  
**Cc:** Berkes, Andrea AEIT:EX; Sharma, Rishi AEIT:EX  
**Subject:** FW: Acknowledging BC's Racist Past - 2nd follow-up

Hi there Kim Coombes, and well Teresa told me that I could fwd this on to you, for a response on this. And especially with all the attachments, too long to be able to print Thanks.

*Kim Coombes, Office Assistant  
Office of the Honourable John Yap  
Minister of Advanced Education,  
Innovation and Technology  
and Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism  
PO Box 9080 Victoria, BC V8W 9E2  
Ph: 250-356-0179 / Fax: 250-952-0260*

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**From:** Sharma, Rishi AEIT:EX  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 4, 2012 3:50 PM  
**To:** Coombes, Kim AEIT:EX  
**Subject:** FW: Acknowledging BC's Racist Past - 2nd follow-up

Hi please send to DMO for FYI and seek their advice on possible response ...  
Thanks,  
r

Rishi Sharma  
Ministerial Assistant to the Honourable John Yap

Minister of Advanced Education, Innovation, Technology and Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism.  
Po Box 9080 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria BC V8W 9E2  
Phone- 250-356-0179  
Fax- 250-952-6795  
<http://www.gov.bc.ca/aved/>

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**From:** Minister, AEIT AEIT:EX  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 4, 2012 3:23 PM  
**To:** Sharma, Rishi AEIT:EX  
**Subject:** FW: Acknowledging BC's Racist Past - 2nd follow-up

What would this follow-up under??? Where should all this information go????  
Kim Coombes

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**From:** Yap.MLA, John [<mailto:John.Yap.MLA@leg.bc.ca>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 4, 2012 3:12 PM  
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Mr. Adrian Dix  
Hon. Ida Chong  
Hon. Richard Lee  
Hon. John Yap  
Ms. Mable Elmore



Hon. Jenny Kwan

\*\*\*\*\*

Victor Wong

CCNC Executive Director

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(416) 977-9871 (tel)

CCNC: [www.ccnc.ca](http://www.ccnc.ca)

Not Too Asian: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/nottooasian/>

## Shaw, Judy E AEIT:EX

---

**From:** Meadows, Jennifer L AEIT:EX  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 21, 2013 4:16 PM  
**To:** Hansen, Erin AEIT:EX  
**Subject:** FW: Acknowledging BC's Racist Past - 2nd follow-up

Hi Erin,

Can you please CLIFF and assign to MCRU to prepare a response from the Minister. MCRU should work with Tony on content.

Thanks

Jennifer

---

**From:** Minty, Dawn M AEIT:EX  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 21, 2013 2:13 PM  
**To:** Meadows, Jennifer L AEIT:EX  
**Cc:** Cook, Jeannette AEIT:EX  
**Subject:** RE: Acknowledging BC's Racist Past - 2nd follow-up

Yes, Tony would be the contact. Thank you for asking

### Dawn Minty

Assistant Deputy Minister  
Post-Secondary Regions, Programs and Multiculturalism Division  
Ministry of Advanced Education, Innovation and Technology  
and Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism  
Ph: 250-952-0697

---

**From:** Meadows, Jennifer L AEIT:EX  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 20, 2013 3:06 PM  
**To:** Minty, Dawn M AEIT:EX  
**Subject:** FW: Acknowledging BC's Racist Past - 2nd follow-up

Hi Dawn,

I can have MCRU prepare a formal response but am hoping you could provide a bit of insight into which pieces we are acknowledging. I don't believe we are addressing the head tax issue but would like to give some direction on drafting of the letter. Would Tony be the best person for them to work with on the content.

thanks  
Jennifer

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**From:** Ives, Andrew AEIT:EX  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 19, 2013 5:28 PM  
**To:** Meadows, Jennifer L AEIT:EX  
**Cc:** Sharma, Rishi AEIT:EX; Black, Marc GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** Fw: Acknowledging BC's Racist Past - 2nd follow-up

Hi Jennifer,

I believe we still had this on hold, but could we please have a formal response drafted. I think Rishi will be able to advise on it.

Thanks,  
Andrew

Andrew Ives  
Executive Assistant to the Honourable John Yap,  
Minister of Advanced Education, Innovation, Technology and Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism.  
Po Box 9080 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria BC V8W 9E2  
Phone- #250-387-8838  
Fax- #250-952-6795

This e-mail transmission is intended solely for the individual or entity to whom it is addressed and is confidential in nature. Please be advised that any distribution, reproduction or other use of this document by anyone other than the addressee is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify us immediately. Thank you for your assistance.

---

**From:** Sharma, Rishi AEIT:EX  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 19, 2013 05:23 PM Pacific Standard Time  
**To:** Ives, Andrew AEIT:EX  
**Subject:** RE: Acknowledging BC's Racist Past - 2nd follow-up

Please have a formal response drafted...  
Rish

Rishi Sharma  
Ministerial Assistant to the Honourable John Yap  
Minister of Advanced Education, Innovation, Technology and Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism.  
Po Box 9080 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria BC V8W 9E2  
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**From:** Ives, Andrew AEIT:EX  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 19, 2013 4:55 PM  
**To:** Sharma, Rishi AEIT:EX  
**Subject:** FW: Acknowledging BC's Racist Past - 2nd follow-up

Original email re Victor Wang

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**Subject:** Acknowledging BC's Racist Past

May 29, 2012

Hon. Christy Clark  
Province of British Columbia  
West Annex  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

**E-mail:** [premier@gov.bc.ca](mailto:premier@gov.bc.ca)

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The BC Government should not be seen to be profiting from racism.

There is no legal impediment for the BC Government **to return the head tax levies to the head tax families**. We specifically seek direct redress based on a one certificate - one payment basis and we have various

workable mechanisms that we could discuss further with you and your officials. We estimate that there are 3,000 head tax families still seeking redress and this figure does not include the 785 families that have already received the \$20,000 payment.

We are available to meet with you and your officials to iron out the details of a positive resolution of this issue.

Sincerely,

Victor Wong  
Executive Director

Cc  
Mr. Adrian Dix  
Hon. Ida Chong  
Hon. Richard Lee  
Hon. John Yap  
Ms. Mable Elmore  
Hon. Jenny Kwan

\*\*\*\*\*

Victor Wong  
CCNC Executive Director  
[national@ccnc.ca](mailto:national@ccnc.ca)  
(416) 977-9871 (tel)  
CCNC: [www.ccnc.ca](http://www.ccnc.ca)  
Not Too Asian: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/nottooasian/>



## Shaw, Judy E AEIT:EX

---

**From:** Meadows, Jennifer L AEIT:EX  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 20, 2013 3:06 PM  
**To:** Minty, Dawn M AEIT:EX  
**Subject:** FW: Acknowledging BC's Racist Past - 2nd follow-up

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Due By:** Thursday, February 21, 2013 12:00 PM  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Hi Dawn,

I can have MCRU prepare a formal response but am hoping you could provide a bit of insight into which pieces we are acknowledging. I don't believe we are addressing the head tax issue but would like to give some direction on drafting of the letter. Would Tony be the best person for them to work with on the content.

thanks  
Jennifer

---

**From:** Ives, Andrew AEIT:EX  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 19, 2013 5:28 PM  
**To:** Meadows, Jennifer L AEIT:EX  
**Cc:** Sharma, Rishi AEIT:EX; Black, Marc GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** Fw: Acknowledging BC's Racist Past - 2nd follow-up

Hi Jennifer,

I believe we still had this on hold, but could we please have a formal response drafted. I think Rishi will be able to advise on it.

Thanks,  
Andrew

Andrew Ives  
Executive Assistant to the Honourable John Yap,  
Minister of Advanced Education, Innovation, Technology and Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism.  
Po Box 9080 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria BC V8W 9E2  
Phone- #250-387-8838  
Fax- #250-952-6795

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**From:** Sharma, Rishi AEIT:EX  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 19, 2013 05:23 PM Pacific Standard Time  
**To:** Ives, Andrew AEIT:EX

**Subject:** RE: Acknowledging BC's Racist Past - 2nd follow-up

Please have a formal response drafted...  
Rish

Rishi Sharma  
Ministerial Assistant to the Honourable John Yap  
Minister of Advanced Education, Innovation, Technology and Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism.  
Po Box 9080 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria BC V8W 9E2  
Phone- 250-356-0179  
Fax- 250-952-6795  
<http://www.gov.bc.ca/aved/>

---

**From:** Ives, Andrew AEIT:EX  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 19, 2013 4:55 PM  
**To:** Sharma, Rishi AEIT:EX  
**Subject:** FW: Acknowledging BC's Racist Past - 2nd follow-up

Original email re Victor Wang

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**From:** Meadows, Jennifer L AEIT:EX  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 5, 2012 2:02 PM  
**To:** Ives, Andrew AEIT:EX  
**Cc:** Sharma, Rishi AEIT:EX; Fleites Toris, Angela AEIT:EX; Lo, Fiera AEIT:EX; Berkes, Andrea AEIT:EX  
**Subject:** FW: Acknowledging BC's Racist Past - 2nd follow-up

Hi Andrew

Given the nature of the incoming email appears to be more tax policy related this would not be dealt with by our Ministry. I would suggest that perhaps you could follow-up with the Premier's Office to confirm if the original incoming was CLIFFed and which Ministry it was directed to and follow-up with your colleagues at Finance as it appears to be more of a Finance issue (tax policy).

Thanks  
Jennifer

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**From:** Minister, AEIT AEIT:EX  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 5, 2012 9:30 AM  
**To:** Meadows, Jennifer L AEIT:EX  
**Cc:** Berkes, Andrea AEIT:EX  
**Subject:** FW: Acknowledging BC's Racist Past - 2nd follow-up

Hi there He e-mailed again, And well Rishi would probably say to send this to you, so here it is again, along with all the attachments.

*Kim Coombes, Office Assistant  
Office of the Honourable John Yap  
Minister of Advanced Education,  
Innovation and Technology  
and Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism*

*PO Box 9080 Victoria, BC V8W 9E2  
Ph: 250-356-0179 / Fax: 250-952-0260*

---

**From:** Yap.MLA, John [<mailto:John.Yap.MLA@leg.bc.ca>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 5, 2012 9:22 AM  
**To:** Minister, AEIT AEIT:EX  
**Cc:** Ng, PoWah LASS:EX  
**Subject:** FW: Acknowledging BC's Racist Past - 2nd follow-up

---

**From:** CCNC National [<mailto:national@ccnc.ca>]  
**Sent:** December-04-12 3:03 PM  
**To:** OfficeofthePremier, Office PREM:EX  
**Cc:** Lee.MLA, Richard; Lee, Richard; Yap.MLA, John; Chong.MLA, Ida; Dix.MLA, Adrian; Kwan, Jenny (Office); Elmore.MLA, Mable  
**Subject:** FW: Acknowledging BC's Racist Past - 2nd follow-up

Dear Premier Clark:

I am writing on behalf of the Chinese Canadian National Council (CCNC) to issue our second follow-up on our letter of May 29th. Despite assurance from your office, we have not yet received any response from your Government.

At CCNC, we have compiled the figures relating to the BC portion of the head taxes collected between 1885 and 1924, and confirm that it was around \$8.5 million, **a sum worth about \$1 billion today.**

Our position is that the Province of BC needs to return a meaningful, symbolic amount to the head tax families. We also believe that this matter can be resolved quickly in a just and honourable manner and we are available to meet with you and your officials to iron out the details of a positive resolution of this issue. Could you please instruct your office to contact us at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Victor Wong  
Executive Director  
416-977-9871

---

**From:** CCNC National [<mailto:national@ccnc.ca>]  
**Sent:** September-14-12 3:35 PM  
**To:** 'premier@gov.bc.ca'  
**Cc:** 'Lee.MLA, Richard'; 'RLee@leg.bc.ca'; 'john.yap.mla@leg.bc.ca'; 'ida.chong.mla@leg.bc.ca'; 'adrian.dix.mla@leg.bc.ca'; 'jenny.kwan.mla@leg.bc.ca'; 'mable.elmore.mla@leg.bc.ca'  
**Subject:** FW: Acknowledging BC's Racist Past

Dear Premier Clark:

I am writing on behalf of the Chinese Canadian National Council (CCNC) to follow-up on our letter of May 29th. We have not received any response from your Government.

I enclose for your review a recent newspaper column from the Head Tax Families Society of Canada in response to a proposed apology to the Chinese Canadian community. At CCNC, we have compiled the figures relating to the BC portion of the head taxes collected between 1885 and 1924, and confirm that it was around \$8.5 million, a sum worth about \$1 billion today.

Our position is that the Province of BC needs to return a meaningful, symbolic amount to the head tax families. We had sent to you a framework for redress and hope to discuss this further with your officials in an effort to resolve this matter. We have the support of the Head Tax Families Society of Canada whose membership includes the families **who were directly affected by BC's past racist laws**.

We also believe that this matter can be resolved quickly in a just and honourable manner and we are available to meet with you and your officials to iron out the details of a positive resolution of this issue. Could you please contact us at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Victor Wong  
Executive Director

---

**From:** CCNC National [<mailto:national@ccnc.ca>]

**Sent:** May-29-12 7:00 PM

**To:** 'premier@gov.bc.ca'

**Cc:** 'Lee.MLA, Richard'; 'RLee@leg.bc.ca'; 'john.yap.mla@leg.bc.ca'; 'ida.chong.mla@leg.bc.ca'; 'adrian.dix.mla@leg.bc.ca'; 'jenny.kwan.mla@leg.bc.ca'; 'mable.elmore.mla@leg.bc.ca'

**Subject:** Acknowledging BC's Racist Past

May 29, 2012

Hon. Christy Clark  
Province of British Columbia  
West Annex  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

**E-mail:** [premier@gov.bc.ca](mailto:premier@gov.bc.ca)

Dear Premier Christy Clark:

RE: Acknowledging BC's Racist Past

I am writing on behalf of the Chinese Canadian National Council (CCNC) to raise the issue of redress of the Head Tax and *Chinese Exclusion Act*. As you may know, about 82,000 Chinese paid \$23 million in head tax levies from 1885 to 1923, a sum worth over \$2 billion today. A portion of these levies – about \$8.5 million – was distributed to the BC Government (a sum worth about \$1 billion today). For three decades, CCNC and the head tax families sought a just and honourable resolution.

On June 22, 2006, Prime Minister Stephen Harper rose in the House of Commons to offer a Parliamentary Apology and to announce \$20,000 in ex-gratia payments to living head tax payers and surviving spouses and a

community education fund. About 785 head tax families were eligible and received this payment. This gesture of symbolic redress was meaningful and an important first step towards reconciliation.

However, the Head Tax and *Chinese Exclusion Act* redress issue has not been fully resolved. There is a need for the BC Government to also make amends with the head tax families.

BC was the province where the racist legislation was initiated. There were various attempts to enact a head tax in BC but such laws passed by the provincial legislature were declared *ultra-vires* by the courts. The federal Government enacted the Head Tax in 1885 with the support of BC political leaders. In 1923, a Member of Parliament from New Westminster moved the *Chinese Exclusion Act* to prohibit further Chinese immigration. This vicious legislation served to separate families and drastically reduce family formation in Canada until it was repealed in 1947. Interestingly, the City of New Westminster recently acknowledged its racist past and apologized to the Chinese Canadian community.

In our view, the BC Government needs to be part of this solution. In 1900 and 1903, there were changes to the *Chinese Immigration Act* to allow the BC Government to receive at first one-quarter and then one-half of the head tax levies collected. An estimated \$8.5 million was sent to BC from the federal Government, a sizeable sum in those days. In fact, the head tax levies made up 10% of the provincial budget in some years.

In 1992, the BC Legislature passed a unanimous resolution to support Chinese head tax redress. We note the themes of reconciliation and strengthening of families in your vision for your Government. Reconciliation is about acknowledging our mistakes, making amends and restoring dignity to the head tax families.

The BC Government should not be seen to be profiting from racism.

There is no legal impediment for the BC Government **to return the head tax levies to the head tax families**. We specifically seek direct redress based on a one certificate - one payment basis and we have various workable mechanisms that we could discuss further with you and your officials. We estimate that there are 3,000 head tax families still seeking redress and this figure does not include the 785 families that have already received the \$20,000 payment.

We are available to meet with you and your officials to iron out the details of a positive resolution of this issue.

Sincerely,

Victor Wong  
Executive Director

Cc  
Mr. Adrian Dix  
Hon. Ida Chong  
Hon. Richard Lee  
Hon. John Yap  
Ms. Mable Elmore  
Hon. Jenny Kwan

\*\*\*\*\*

Victor Wong  
CCNC Executive Director  
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(416) 977-9871 (tel)  
CCNC: [www.ccnc.ca](http://www.ccnc.ca)  
Not Too Asian: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/nottooasian/>



Chinese Canadian National Council

Conseil national des canadiens chinois

Suite 507, 302 Spadina Avenue, Toronto, ON M5T 2E7 Canada Tel: (416) 977-9871 Fax:  
(416) 977-1630

May 29, 2012

Hon. Christy Clark  
Province of British Columbia  
West Annex  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

**E-mail:** [premier@gov.bc.ca](mailto:premier@gov.bc.ca)

Dear Premier Christy Clark:

RE: Acknowledging BC's Racist Past

I am writing on behalf of the Chinese Canadian National Council (CCNC) to raise the issue of redress of the Head Tax and *Chinese Exclusion Act*. As you may know, about 82,000 Chinese paid \$23 million in head tax levies from 1885 to 1923, a sum worth over \$2 billion today. A portion of these levies about \$8.5 million was distributed to the BC Government (a sum worth about \$1 billion today). For three decades, CCNC and the head tax families sought a just and honourable resolution.

On June 22, 2006, Prime Minister Stephen Harper rose in the House of Commons to offer a Parliamentary Apology and to announce \$20,000 in ex-gratia payments to living head tax payers and surviving spouses and a community education fund. About 785 head tax families were eligible and received this payment. This gesture of symbolic redress was meaningful and an important first step towards reconciliation.

However, the Head Tax and *Chinese Exclusion Act* redress issue has not been fully resolved. There is a need for the BC Government to also make amends with the head tax families.

BC was the province where the racist legislation was initiated. There were various attempts to enact a head tax in BC but such laws passed by the provincial legislature were declared *ultra-vires* by the courts. The federal Government enacted the Head Tax in 1885 with the support of BC political leaders. In 1923, a Member of Parliament from New Westminster moved the *Chinese Exclusion Act* to prohibit further Chinese immigration. This vicious legislation served to separate families and drastically reduce family formation in Canada until it was repealed in 1947. Interestingly, the City of New Westminster recently acknowledged its racist past and apologized to the Chinese Canadian community.



In our view, the BC Government needs to be part of this solution. In 1900 and 1903, there were changes to the *Chinese Immigration Act* to allow the BC Government to receive at first one-quarter and then one-half of the head tax levies collected. An estimated \$8.5 million was sent to BC from the federal Government, a sizeable sum in those days. In fact, the head tax levies made up 10% of the provincial budget in some years.

In 1992, the BC Legislature passed a unanimous resolution to support Chinese head tax redress. We note the themes of reconciliation and strengthening of families in your vision for your Government. Reconciliation is about acknowledging our mistakes, making amends and restoring dignity to the head tax families.

The BC Government should not be seen to be profiting from racism.

There is no legal impediment for the BC Government **to return the head tax levies to the head tax families**. We specifically seek direct redress based on a one certificate - one payment basis and we have various workable mechanisms that we could discuss further with you and your officials. We estimate that there are 3,000 head tax families still seeking redress and this figure does not include the 785 families that have already received the \$20,000 payment.

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Sincerely,

Victor Wong  
Executive Director

Cc  
Mr. Adrian Dix  
Hon. Ida Chong  
Hon. Richard Lee  
Hon. John Yap  
Ms. Mable Elmore  
Hon. Jenny Kwan

人頭稅家屬會拒納省府道歉  
周明輝：口惠實不至無補於事  
July 31, 2012

Head Tax Families Society of Canada rejects the provincial government to issue an apology

“Just talk and no action does not help” …Sid Tan

【明報專訊】加拿大人頭稅家屬會表示，卑詩省政府當年分取近半人頭稅，間接從不公義的人頭稅中受益。故不會接受省府單純的道歉了事。

推動省府就過往的不公義行徑向華人道歉的省議員李燦明則表示，人頭稅並不是省府權限之事，省府的道歉不會牽扯上人頭稅。

在部分省議員的推動下，卑詩省府正考慮就過往不公平政策法律向華人作出道歉。

但加拿大人頭稅家屬會的發言人周明輝認為，單純的道歉徒具形式，缺乏實質意義，而且避重就輕。卑詩省政府不能逃避當年分取了巨額人頭稅的事實，省府確曾自這一項不公義的收入中受益。

周明輝表示，省府假若真的要與人頭稅家屬和解並修復關係，不能只道歉了事。

他指出，在人頭稅家庭中，有人因要借錢繳交人頭稅，長期陷於貧困。有人因為沒錢交人頭稅而長時間家庭破碎，這均是實質性的創痛。他認為省府若要彌補與人頭稅家屬的關係，就應該採取實質性的行動。

周明輝強調，不接納單純道歉，一定要配合實質行動。他說，並不是為了錢而爭取，而是為了公道而爭取。「假若你偷了我的錢，當然要道歉，但是否道歉之後便不需要把偷來的錢交還。」他說，就算省府提出金錢賠償，他個人也會把錢捐出。

周明輝說，人頭稅家屬先前也曾看到人頭稅議題被當作選舉前拉票的手段，也曾經看到人頭稅成為政客出風頭出鏡的工具，他不會再輕易上當。「上當第一次，羞愧的是你。上當第二次，羞愧的應該是我」。

周明輝最敬重的祖父曾教導他，西方人很輕易道歉，「對不起」隨口而出。但很多時口不對心，沒有實質意義，提醒他不要輕信。

積極推動省府向華人道歉的本那比北區省議員李燦明表示，他也知道社群內有不同意見。但他強調，省府向華人的道歉不會牽扯上人頭稅，因為人頭稅當年是由聯邦政府施行。而且聯邦政府已經就人頭稅道歉過一次，並向在世的人頭稅繳納者及其配偶作出金錢補償。

他說，卑詩省府道歉的對象，只是省府權限下的政策法律。譬如是以以前華人被禁止擁有官地等。

李燦明表示，就是道歉也需要知道為什麼而道歉，故此要重新審核省府過往政策法律上對華人不公平之處，但這一過程需要花不少工夫及時間，究竟道歉在什麼時候進行，目前仍然難說。

周明輝認為，就算是道歉的對象，也有斟酌的餘地。他認為應該是直接受害的人頭稅繳納人及其家屬。

#### 卑詩分取近半稅金

卑詩省議會在1878(一說1884年)引入法律，阻止華人移民卑詩，但因為超越權限而被法庭判決無效，未能執行。

可是在卑詩省不少白人組織、政黨及國會議員的推動下，聯邦政府在1885年通過華人移民法案，開始向華人移民徵收人頭稅。最初金額為50元。其後不斷提升，至1903年提升至500元。1923年，聯邦政府引入排華法，完全禁止華人移民加拿大。繳納人頭稅的華人總計共8.1萬，涉及的總金額達2300萬元。

據全加華人協進會(CCNC)估計，卑詩省自1902年至1923年期間約分得近一半的人頭稅，總金額為1000萬元，相等於現時的6億元。最近也有估計，卑詩省當年約分得900萬元。

周明輝指出，當年卑詩省府稅源不多，人頭稅「分紅」成為卑其中一項主要收入。

Article translation:

Sid Tan says HTFSC saw how the Head Tax issue was used as a means to obtain more votes in previous elections and saw how the issue was used as a tool of politicians for take credit publicly; he claims he will not easily fall into those set-ups. "Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me."

Sid Tan's grandfather once taught him that Westerners apologize very easily. "Sorry" is often vocalized, but many times this is not what is within their heart. There is no meaning, and reminded him not to easily believe in them.

Burnaby MLA Richard Lee states that he knows there are varying opinions but said that the provincial government's apology will not touch on Head Tax because the Head Tax was implemented by the federal government. And the federal government already apologized once for the Head Tax and made monetary payment to those payers and their spouses.

He says that the audience for the provincial apology is only for those policies and laws under provincial guidelines. For example, the exclusion on Chinese owning property, etc.

Richard Lee claims, even if there is an apology, they need to know what they are apologizing for. And so, the government needs to re-assess the past wrongs in policy and law towards the Chinese. This process will take time and effort, and as to when the apology will come, it is hard to say at the moment.

Sid Tan believes the audience of the apology also needs to be clarified. He feels it should be to those who were directly affected/victimized by the Head Tax and their families.

BC received half of the money

BC Provincial Committee in 1878 added a law that terminated Chinese immigration to BC, but because it surpassed their jurisdiction it was never passed in court.

But there were many white organizations, parties, and politicians who pushed for the 1885 federal decision for the case against Chinese immigration, beginning with the Head Tax. At first it was \$50, but it kept increasing; in 1903, it was raised to \$500. 1923, the federal government introduced anti-Chinese laws, ending all immigration to Canada. They received head tax from 81,000 with a total amount of around \$23,000,000.

According to CCNC's calculations, between 1902 and 1923, BC obtained half of the Head Tax revenues; which comes to a total of ten million dollars, which is equivalent to about \$600 million today. More recently, the sum BC received was lowered to \$9 million.

## **Head Tax and Chinese Exclusion Act Redress**

### **A Framework for Reconciliation with the Government of BC**

This Framework for Reconciliation is proposed by the Chinese Canadian National Council (CCNC) and Head Tax families to resolve the historic injustices related to the Head Tax and Chinese Exclusion Act.

On May 22, 1992, the BC Legislature passed unanimous motion supporting redress and reconciliation (see below). A number of significant milestones have been attained over the last few years including the 2006 Parliamentary Apology offered by the federal Government and the redress announcement which included symbolic financial redress to living head tax payers and surviving spouses and symbolic community redress. However, the redress announcement excluded the head tax families where the head tax payer and spouse had passed away. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador also issued a statement of apology for the Newfoundland Head Tax.

The Head Tax families have sought justice for many decades now and the progress towards reconciliation must include the Government of BC. CCNC and the Head Tax families urge the Government of BC to enter into good-faith negotiations to acknowledge and to make amends for the Province's role in promoting anti-Chinese legislation and regulations that led to the imposition of the Head Tax and Chinese Exclusion Act.

The Government of BC received a share of the head tax levies between 1900 and 1923 and received more than \$8.5 million, a sum worth close to \$1 billion today. CCNC and the Head Tax families urge the Government of BC to acknowledge and apologize for its role in promoting anti-Chinese legislation and to offer a symbolic return of these ill-gotten gains to the Head Tax families.

The Government of BC has assigned priority to strengthening families, promoting diversity and respecting human dignity. It should not be seen to be profiting from racism. The Head Tax and Chinese Exclusion Act affected entire families and the following principles should guide the discussion towards offering appropriate redress and towards reconciliation.

#### **General principles**

The principles we have articulated still hold but they must be refined to deal with the issues in a meaningful manner:

The fundamental purpose of redress is to achieve reconciliation and it is a test of the Government of BC's commitment to promote diversity and respect human dignity.

The Government of BC should resolve this issue with the affected head tax families about 4,000 head tax families have registered with the Chinese Canadian National Council and various local head tax redress committees since 1984. The individuals who

directly experienced the Head Tax and Chinese Exclusion Act are over 64 years of age and this underscores the urgency of acting swiftly to resolve the issue. Acknowledgement and Apology are important elements in recognizing the role of past governments in promoting and supporting racist legislation.

Symbolic direct redress and symbolic community redress would give meaning to the offer of an Apology and Redress. To redress this matter properly, all affected head tax families should be included.

This is an issue of moral and natural justice. The focus of redress should be a message of respect for human dignity. The decision therefore should not be confined to legal arguments but to restore dignity to the affected families.

### **Parameters for Inclusive Redress**

This is a moral decision of the Government of BC.

The impact of the legislation affected entire families.

The impact of reconciliation will be felt by the Chinese head tax families and all British Columbians.

Redress should be offered primarily to the affected entire families. The principle of “one certificate, one payment,” should be respected.

The federal ex-gratia payments process offers a mechanism for symbolic direct redress to the affected head tax families, including to those families where both the head tax payer and spouse are deceased.

The amount of direct redress must be substantive to be meaningful but has always been recognized as a symbolic amount.

A target date of July 1<sup>st</sup> would be symbolic as it coincides with the 89<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the imposition of the 1923 Chinese Exclusion Act.

While there may be different ideas as to what is the appropriate form and amount of redress, we should be able to agree on this framework of principles to achieve reconciliation.

Chinese Canadian National Council  
Head Tax Families Society of Canada

## **1. Chinese Immigration Act 1900, c.32**

### **Chinese Immigration Act 1900, c.32**

#### ***An Act respecting Chinese Immigration***

##### **Application of taxes, etc.**

###### **s. 24**

**All taxes, pecuniary penalties and revenues from other sources under this Act shall be paid into and form part of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Canada; but one-fourth part [emphasis added] of the net proceeds of all such taxes paid by Chinese immigrants shall, at the end of every fiscal year, be paid out of such fund to the province wherein they were collected.**

## **2. Chinese Immigration Act 1903, c. 8**

### **Chinese Immigration Act 1903, c. 8**

##### **Application of taxes, etc.**

###### **s. 24**

**All taxes, pecuniary penalties, and revenues from other sources under this Act shall be paid into and form part of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Canada; but, subject to such conditions and regulations as are prescribed by order of the Governor in Council, one-half part [emphasis added] of the net proceeds of all such taxes paid by Chinese immigrants on entering Canada shall, at the end of every fiscal year, be paid out of such fund to the province wherein they were collected.**



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Note: The electronic version of the following Hansard is for informational purposes only. The printed version remains the official version.

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HANSARD  
Published By Authority  
Volume 3, No. 12  
Victoria, May 22, 1992

FRIDAY, MAY 22, 1992

The House met at 10:05 a.m.

Prayers.

Introduction of Bills  
Orders of the Day  
Private Members' Statements

Motions on Notice

CHINESE HEAD TAX

HON. G. CLARK: I am delighted today, after consultations with the opposition parties, to call the first motion on the order paper, under the name of the member for Vancouver Kensington. I will read it to the House:

"Be it resolved that this House calls on the government of Canada to expeditiously provide a reasonable redress for the injustice of the Chinese head tax, an issue of concern to all Canadians, and the Chinese Canadians in particular. The said redress must be provided and agreed upon in consultations with the Chinese Canadian community."

In discussion with the opposition parties, there has been agreement to limit the speeches to 15 minutes so that many members can participate in this discussion.

On Motion 1.

U. DOSANJH: With the introduction of freedom of information legislation, with the statement from my good friend the hon. member for Richmond Steveston and the reply from the member for Burnaby, as well as the statement from the hon. member for Mission Kent, all of that sets the stage very appropriately for what I want to talk about today. I want to deal with the head tax imposed on the Chinese Canadian community by the federal government commencing in 1885, which was then terminated in 1923.

In 1923, on the heels of the cancellation of the head tax, came the Chinese exclusion act otherwise known as the Chinese Immigration Act. This excluded with very minor exceptions any further immigration from China, therefore separating families for years. People who were here would return to China, either get married or meet their wives and have children, and then come back. After many years of living here again, they would go back and see their families and perhaps have some more children. You saw the turmoil and the torture perpetrated on that part of our community; in fact, an ancient community in terms of

our history, a community that started dropping its roots in British Columbia in 1858, over 130 years ago.

This is a historic day because it was at the urging of many politicians in British Columbia that eventually the federal government caved in and imposed the head tax in 1885. It's a historic day because many of our pioneers who were in the halls of the Legislature perhaps in other chambers or this chamber asked for the imposition of that head tax.

I stand here today not to find fault with those pioneers who built this province and this country. I stand here to recognize those other pioneers who were the victims of this injustice and who also contributed to the building of this province and to the building of this country the Chinese Canadians who have over the last 130 years worked very, very hard along with other British Columbians and Canadians to make this province and this country what it is today.

As most of the members would know, it is important for this body to send a message to Ottawa for three reasons: the racial hostility towards the Chinese Canadians actually originated in this part of Canada; the federal head tax was imposed on the Chinese Canadians at the urging of the British Columbia politicians; all of Canada, including British Columbia, have benefited from the proceeds of that injustice, which amounted to some \$23 million between 1885 to 1923 and which would today amount to over \$1 billion. That is a horrendous sum, indicating the horrendous injustice perpetrated upon those Chinese Canadians who paid that head tax and became contributing citizens of this country and residents of this province.

I don't want to sound like a professor of history, but I want to take you through the chronology of the legislation that was introduced or passed both in British Columbia and federally. I will simply give you the name of the attempt or the legislation, and briefly what it did or attempted to do.

In the year 1860, the colony of Vancouver Island introduced legislation proposing a \$10 head tax on all Chinese entrants into Canada, and fortunately that was defeated. In 1871 in the B.C. Legislative Council, legislation was introduced proposing a \$50 head tax, and fortunately that was defeated. Obviously people of conscience existed even then, and we have to recognize that. In 1872 in the B.C. Legislature a piece of legislation was introduced attempting to exclude Chinese labour on public works projects, and that was defeated. In 1875 in the B.C. Legislature the Qualifications and Registration of Voters Act was passed, thereby taking away the right of Chinese Canadians to vote in elections in British Columbia, and that legislation was passed.

In 1878 the B.C. Legislature proposed legislation imposing a \$10 special tax on Chinese Canadians. It was passed, but ruled unconstitutional by the courts in British Columbia. In 1884 the B.C. Legislature again introduced an act to prevent Chinese from acquiring Crown land. It was declared ultra vires by the courts in British Columbia. A further act to prevent Chinese immigration was disallowed by the Governor General of Canada. The Chinese Regulation Act was declared ultra vires by the courts in British Columbia. In 1884 the dominion government appointed a Royal Commission on Chinese

Immigration. I want members to note that it was around that time, 1884, 1885, that the Canadian Pacific Railway was completed. In 1884 the dominion government appointed a Royal Commission on Chinese immigration. In 1885 the dominion government, again: an act to restrict and regulate Chinese immigration into Canada, and a \$50 head tax was imposed. That was the first time the federal government, succumbing to the pressure from British Columbia, imposed that head tax.

[11:15]

In 1900 the dominion government again: the Chinese Immigration Act. The head tax, raised to \$100, effective 1902, passed. In 1903 the dominion government: Chinese Immigration Act, head tax raised to \$500, effective 1904. In 1903 the B.C. Legislature: the removal of the municipal franchise from the Chinese Canadians thereby excluding them from certain professions in British Columbia. In 1922 dominion government: a resolution in favour of terminating Chinese immigration passed, effective July 1, 1923. In 1923 the dominion Government again: Chinese Immigration Act, banning immigration generally of any Chinese into Canada, with the exception of merchants, university students, Canadian born Chinese and diplomatic personnel. That 1923 act excluding Chinese from immigrating into Canada was repealed, and in 1947 the B.C. Legislature granted Chinese Canadians the right to vote in this province.

That is the unfortunate history of the injustice suffered by thousands of Chinese Canadians and their descendants over the years. It's important to recognize that, because if we as a society don't recognize that, we don't make any progress.

In 1885 the attempts to exclude Chinese from certain rights or impose certain restrictions began. In this province attempts began in the 1860s. But the federal government the dominion government then needed Chinese labour to complete the Canadian Pacific Railway, because there were certain dangerous areas where other British Columbians refused to work, where only the imported Chinese labourer would work.

Many of these immigrants who paid this head tax rendered their families in China landless and deep in debt. They came to this country many at a young age and worked under those circumstances where they had no equality. Of course, the difficulty with building the railway delayed the imposition of the head tax, but the contractors believed that any race that could build the Wall of China could build the CPR. Those were in fact the words uttered by some of the contractors who wanted to import Chinese labour for that purpose.

Between 1880 and 1884 more than 15,000 Chinese labourers were brought into Canada, either from China or the United States of America. There were, as I said, the dangerous sections of the CPR. From Boston Bar to Lytton it was so serious that there were great difficulties in getting men who were willing to be suspended by ropes to drill holes in chasm walls for explosives. Therefore the Chinese labourers were sent for. The construction sites were so dangerous that they were given infamous names like Hell's Gate, Jaws of Death Arch, and Indictment Hole. Accidents were frequent, and many Chinese Canadians died during the construction of that railway. The sad irony of all this was that

when the last spike was driven with an elaborate ceremony, not a single Chinese Canadian was present at that ceremony.

I want to talk about a man who was recently mentioned in an article in the Vancouver Sun, and I want essentially to be referring to the article in the Vancouver Sun because it depicts a picture for all of us. He came when he was 11 years old, in 1912. He paid a \$500 head tax to enter Canada. He worked all his life. In fact, he left his family landless and deeply in debt. Imagine the torture and the turmoil, the emotional strain and the physical labour that he might have gone through, when from 1923 to 1947 he could not be reunited with any members of his family unless he himself went back to China. I want to quote from the Vancouver Sun article, where he says: "You can't imagine the struggle of an 11 year old Chinese boy in that do or die situation in Canada, trying to grow up in a society that valued their horses and dogs far above any Chinese." This gentleman served in the latter stages of the Second World War and underwent commando training. He and many others have made tremendous contributions to the building of this province and this country and to the prosperity that we enjoy today.

All he is saying is essentially this: "I'm hoping and praying that an all party apology on the Chinese head tax will soon be a reality for all of us head tax payers." He says that the suffering and the injustice that our Chinese Canadians have suffered and tolerated over the years would only be redressed with that apology. In terms of the compensation, I don't think money is important. Someone from the head tax payers says: "You can give us a token compensation, but give us the apology so that we feel that we and our descendants belong in this country." And they certainly do belong, because they have made significant contributions to the building of this province and this country.

It is extremely disturbing that the federal government has been lobbied.... Representations have been made to them over the years. In fact, the first head tax payer to raise this issue back in the early eighties with Margaret Mitchell, the Member of Parliament for Vancouver East, who raised it in the House has already passed away. Time is running out. I understand there are less than 200 surviving head tax payers. It's important that we, as a society and a province, send a message to our children that we are willing to review history, look at our mistakes, stand tall, admit the mistakes and in the attempt to bring all of our citizens into the Canadian fold in a real and meaningful way, offer an apology to them. It is not infra dignitatem. It is not beneath our dignity as Canadians and as British Columbians. In fact, it only enhances our dignity to ask the federal government to do what's right and what's just and not delay it even one day more.

L. REID: I rise today in support of my colleague for Vancouver Kensington. We are facing ongoing discrimination in our society, and it must be confronted. One hundred years have passed, and it is only today, May 22, 1992, that we are addressing the Chinese head tax. All Canadians must be part of the solution, and together we must formulate a response to both the Chinese exclusion act and the head tax.

Chinese immigrants first came to Canada in 1858. Starting in 1880 thousands of Chinese workers were brought over to build Canada's

national railway and were paid starvation wages. Right after the last spike was driven in 1885, our Canadian government responded by imposing a head tax on each Chinese person entering Canada. This was a unique and clearly racist act of Parliament. From 1885 to 1923 all Chinese immigrants in our country were forced to pay the head tax. It started at \$50 and rose to \$100 in 1900. By 1903 each Chinese person had to pay \$500 to enter Canada. At that time, this amounted to over two years' wages for a Chinese worker in Canada. From 1885 to 1923 the Canadian government collected about \$23 million in head taxes from over 81,000 Chinese immigrants. With interest, this amount is worth over \$1 billion today. It is significant that the Canadian government, while profiting from this racist legislation, was paying European immigrants to settle the same land that our Chinese Canadian pioneers helped to open up with the national railway.

My grandfather was born in 1901 in Ukraine. He came to Canada as a young boy and settled on the Canadian prairies. His family continues to farm the land to this day. His parents were the recipients of land and settlement costs and all of those things from this government. It is abundantly unfair that we would treat one group of immigrants differently than another group who wished to settle in Canada and help build this country.

The Chinese exclusion act 1923 to 1947 was an inhuman and expensive undertaking, but it was followed by more racist measures. The Immigration Act, more properly named the Chinese exclusion act, effective on July 1, 1923, closed the doors on Chinese immigration. Fewer than 50 Chinese people entered Canada between 1923 and 1947, when the exclusion act was finally and mercifully repealed.

In addition to continuing the cruel separation of families, the Chinese exclusion act also required every resident of Chinese origin to register with the Canadian government. It is little wonder that until the repeal of the act in 1947 Chinese Canadians never celebrated Dominion Day, or Canada Day. Instead, July 1 was seen as humiliation day. The head tax followed by the Chinese exclusion act represents 62 years of legislated racism. The suffering of individuals and the damage to the Chinese Canadian community must not be underestimated.

If we were to offer any suggestions to improve this motion, it would be to further strengthen the resolution. We would suggest adding a reference to the Chinese exclusion act, as this horrific legislation served to separate families for decades. Some remain separated from their loved ones even to this day. The same issue should be resolved in consultation with the head tax claimants, who are the victims of the racist legislation.

[11:30]

We feel that the term "Chinese Canadian community" is too broad in scope, as we are seeking justice at the individual level. Perhaps a compromise could be a reference to the head tax claimants and Chinese Canadians in our communities.

Certainly the hon. member for Vancouver Kensington and I have participated in a number of events the Chinese Canadian National Council and the National Redress Committee. They believe they are

entering a critical stage in their campaign for justice. Certainly this is affecting most predominantly the elderly pioneers in the Chinese Canadian community. Justice for fewer than 1,000 surviving head tax payers cannot wait. There are many elderly widows who are suffering inhumanely from our racist legislation that impoverished families and kept family members separated for decades.

For some, the Chinese exclusion act served to separate Chinese Canadians from their loved ones for an entire lifetime. That is an issue which speaks very strongly to me. The Chinese Canadian community in my riding of Richmond East is almost a bachelor community. A number of these individuals were not able to return to China and were not able to afford to bring their family members over. The exclusion act contributed to the destruction of a number of families in my community because some 25 years elapsed. Certainly 25 years in terms of keeping a family together is very difficult.

I believe that leadership in this government is required to redress these past injustices in a just and honourable manner. I stand today with my colleague from Vancouver Kensington on this issue which affects us all. This is not a party issue. This is an issue of fundamental human rights that I believe we must all promote before another day passes.

HON. G. CLARK: I'm proud to rise to speak in favour of this motion as the Minister of Finance and, importantly, as the MLA for Vancouver Kingsway. Vancouver Kingsway has a proud tradition of CCF and NDP Members of Parliament and members of the Legislature who have spoken out in favour of human rights in this country, both in good times and in bad. Canadians such as Angus and Grace MacInnis spent their lives fighting for voting rights for Chinese Canadians and against the Chinese exclusion act, opposing the internment of Japanese Canadians and seeking justice for all Canadians.

CCF NDP members, candidates and elected representatives, particularly in the 1930s, were viciously attacked for this advocacy by political opponents and in the press. I'd like to read to the House today an ad placed in the Daily Province on October 7, 1935: "Fifty thousand Orientals in B.C. CCF party stands pledged to give them the vote. The Liberal Party is opposed to giving these Orientals the vote. A vote for any CCF candidate is a vote to give the Chinaman and Japanese the same voting right that you have." And it goes on.

Another ad produced by the Conservative Party went as follows: "Fifty thousand Orientals in B.C. to whom neither the Conservative nor the Liberal Party will give the vote, but there are 40 million Orientals in Japan who threaten Canada's workers and industry. Vote Conservative."

[D. Streifel in the chair.]

I don't quote these for any partisan reason. Clearly those two parties have long since changed their views. However, it demonstrates both the racism of the time and the courage to fight racism of some of my predecessors in the movement that I belong to. They persisted, and

in the end Chinese Canadians and indeed, all Canadians have won significant victories over prejudice and racism.

The imposition of the Chinese head tax and later the Chinese exclusion act represents one of the worst chapters in Canadian history. With respect to the Chinese head tax, between 1885 and 1923 every Chinese immigrant was forced to pay a tax of between \$50 and \$500. As the B.C. Coalition of Head Tax Payers, Spouses and Descendants has noted, this was no small amount of money. For the average Chinese immigrant this represented two years' wages. The total amount paid by Chinese immigrants was staggering. Between 1905 and 1914 alone, the government of Canada collected \$13.8 million from the Chinese. This figure is equivalent to about 8 percent of all excise duties and about 14 percent of the national defence budget of the day. The number of Chinese Canadians in Canada accounted for only 0.39 percent of the population at the time. Approximately 81,000 Chinese Canadians paid the head tax in those years. At the same time as the previous speaker has noted Canada was actually paying European immigrants to settle on the prairies. I might add that, although the Chinese head tax was a federal initiative, it was introduced at the request of the British Columbia government after provincial legislation had failed to establish a head tax. Over 80 percent of Chinese head tax payers lived in British Columbia.

In 1923 the House of Commons in Ottawa passed the Chinese exclusion act. This barred Chinese immigrants from entering Canada. This racist law resulted in the separation of numerous families and enormous distress in the Chinese Canadian community. It also required every Canadian resident of Chinese origin to register with the Canadian government. Only a handful of Chinese immigrants were able to enter Canada in this period. Between 1931 and 1941 the total population of Chinese Canadians dropped from 46,000 to 35,000. The head tax and the Chinese exclusion act represent 62 years of legislated racism in Canada.

The Chinese Canadian community has always responded to racism with courage, endurance and vision. They organized. In 1906 the Chinese Benevolent Association was formed. When, in 1907, Chinese schoolchildren were banned from public schools in British Columbia, the CBA built a school of its own. After the infamous race riots, when some 30,000 people rampaged through Chinatown in Vancouver, the CBA demanded compensation from the government of Canada. They fought the head tax and the exclusion act during the Depression, and provided food, bedding, transit and medicine for the elderly and the sick. In 1939, when this country went to war, many Chinese Canadians enlisted in the armed forces and fought for this country, despite the fact that they were systematically discriminated against at home.

Chinese Canadians have made an enormous contribution to our province and our country. Many of the victims of the Chinese head tax and the Chinese exclusion act presently live in my constituency of Vancouver Kingsway. They are seeking redress from the federal government for the head tax and the exclusion act, and I strongly support their efforts.

The issue was put in context recently by Sgt. Wing Wong, a head tax payer and decorated World War II veteran, who urged the federal



government to redress this issue. He said: "It would give my mind a great sense of relief and ease." A lifetime of insufferable racial injustices was heaped upon this person, who has proven to be as upright, law abiding and patriotic as anyone who has set foot in this wonderful country of ours. He said: "Do it now, do it fairly and do a good job."

Hon. Speaker, this is indeed an historic day, as this House in many respects was the leading force in imposing the head tax and the exclusion act. I think it does a great sense of justice for all members of this House to vote unanimously in favour of this resolution in recognition of that shameful part of British Columbia's history.

D. SYMONS: I too wish to add my support to the motion, a motion that I'm sure every member of this House will support. I believe it's most appropriate that a motion to redress the Chinese head tax act, which was an infamous act in its day, should come from this House because as the previous member has said this was an act that, in a sense, was promoted and encouraged by the government of the day in British Columbia. I think it appropriate that redress because of that action back then should come from the same House, and I would commend the government for bringing forth this motion.

We cannot erase the wrongs committed in the past against people based on their different colour of skin, their language or their religion. However, we can recognize and acknowledge the injustices performed upon them.

Recognition is the first step in correcting the problems of prejudice. I believe the key word in this motion is "redress," because that word allows the flexibility that's going to be needed to provide different responses to those groups that have been discriminated against. Redress need not be monetary, but should, as the motion states, be negotiated with the affected communities.

Japanese and Chinese Canadians suffered an overt and financial discrimination. Many other groups have also been subject to the humiliation of prejudice: East Indians, West Indians, Blacks, eastern Europeans, Canadian aboriginal peoples, Quebecers, Catholics, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs. Many groups have been discriminated against by people in our country, and I'm afraid that when I was a youngster, I took part in some of that as well. I've learned from my mistakes of the past and am now sorry for them.

The point is that prejudice has been alive in our past and in this country, and it is still alive maybe less overtly today. Redress is but one step in addressing past and present prejudices. We can see only too painfully how prejudices and injustices left untreated can lead to situations such as we see in Ireland and Yugoslavia, or even the recent race riots in the United States. Redress won't right the wrongs, but it will help to heal the hurts and the wounds. I urge all to support this motion.

C. SERWA: I'm also pleased to rise and speak in support of the motion put forward by the member for Vancouver Kensington. Canada is often haunted by history, and I think it should be said at this time that Ukrainians, Italians and Chinese, as well as Japanese the issue

of the private member's statement this morning seek redress of their historic ill treatment by Ottawa. We say Ottawa and we can say British Columbia, but we can really say the people and the society of that day and of that time, and that the politicians were a reflection of the society.

The nature of Canada has changed a great deal, and I think we've come a very long way. However, an internment camp existed in World War I in the shadow of Castle Mountain in Banff National Park where hundreds of Canadians of Ukrainian extraction were sent. Their crime? Their homeland Galicia and Bukovina in the western Ukraine was under the Austro Hungarian empire, and thus Canada regarded them as enemy aliens. Some 5,000 Ukrainian Canadians were taken from homesteads, from the prairies, from lumber camps in Quebec and from factories in southern Ontario. Men, and in some cases women and children, were imprisoned in 26 camps strung across Canada. After years of inactivity by successive national governments, the present federal government has recognized and attempted to right historical wrongs. Prime Minister Mulroney offered an unqualified apology on behalf of all Canadians and the Canadian government to Italian Canadians who were interned during the Second World War.

Today we are speaking primarily about the injustice of the Chinese head tax. Representatives of the Chinese Canadian Council are seeking compensation for \$23 million in head taxes paid by Chinese immigrants to Canada in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There are two schools of thought on this. One says to ignore, and say that these historical injustices never happened. The other school of thought says to acknowledge and deal with the historical injustices, in the belief that a strong country is capable of looking at its past and resolving those injustices. The latter is the appropriate course. The appropriate course must be taken, and it must happen.

Earlier in the private member's statement by the member for Mission Kent on Japanese Canadians.... They received \$39 million as global compensation to fund a Canadian race relations foundation and various community programs. Individual Japanese Canadians who were interned were entitled to a cash payment of \$21,000. Eighteen thousand Canadians of Japanese origin who were interned have applied, and the payments will exceed \$400 million.

[11:45]

Since 1984, Canada's Chinese communities have been seeking an acknowledgement of the injustice they endured as a result of the Chinese exclusion act, which prohibited all Chinese immigration to Canada from 1923 to 1947. In addition, the community is seeking \$23 million the actual cost of the day of the head tax imposed on Chinese immigrants to Canada between 1885 and 1923. The requests are fair and just, and they are based on a people's suffering because of a deliberate racial policy on the part of governments of the day. The request must be met, and doing so will send a clear message that racism will not be tolerated in our multicultural Canada of today.

Canada is the world's first truly international country. The tapestry of Canada is woven of threads representing every race, colour and religion of the world. We can and must continue to provide

leadership to the world in order to demonstrate that in Canada a land of freedom, opportunity and liberty diverse peoples laugh, work, play and cry together.

Chinese Canadians have built and continue to build a British Columbia and a Canada that provides peace, prosperity and security for all Canadians. Whether in business, agriculture, the professions medicine, the arts, sciences or in the workforce, Canadians of Chinese origin are a vital part of this nation.

I am very pleased, on behalf of my party, to support the motion brought forward by the member for Vancouver Kensington.

HON. T. PERRY: Hon. Speaker, I will be very brief because the eloquence of the member for Vancouver Kensington who moved this motion and of subsequent speakers has covered most of the ground that I might have addressed. I speak in support of the motion. Through you, hon. Speaker, and through other members of the assembly, I want to speak to our colleagues in the federal Parliament and in the government of Canada.

The hon. member for Vancouver Kensington took us through the history of the head tax and exclusion acts, which is covered in a book I studied briefly, from the library, entitled *In the Sea of Sterile Mountains*, published in 1973, by James Morton. The photographs in this book describe equally eloquently that period of the history of our province. A photograph of two Chinese Canadian children on a main street in Barkerville brings me back to my first experience of visiting Barkerville in 1963 or 1964 and seeing, even at that time, the evidence of the history of Chinese Canadian immigrants who had struggled to make their way, like the other miners, up into the Cariboo, but who had a particular burden and a different burden. Not only did they undergo the indescribable horrors of the road construction in the Fraser Canyon and of the railway construction a decade or two later, but they also had to contend with the treatment described by the hon. member for Vancouver Kensington as he concluded his remarks: the contempt of their fellow human beings. The very people who had undergone perhaps the worst suffering were held in the most contempt.

What is so sad and, I think, emphasizes our sense of urgency to the federal Parliament is what was described by other hon. members: the fact that the people of the first generation are now rapidly dying away. If the healing is to be accomplished in our province and country, it is very important that that be done while those people are still alive.

It is important that we reflect on how this affects us as well, as British Columbians living in 1992. It saddens me to think it infuriates me, but it saddens me more that virtually every time I visit one of the parks in my own neighbourhood in Vancouver, Jericho Park, I see a new anti Chinese slogan written on the park benches. I have tried rubbing them out with my own hand. They are usually painted fairly indelibly, and it's not that easy to get them off. I've tried sitting on the bench to prevent other people from seeing the sign, but you can't sit there forever. I always find it very painful to have to walk away from the sign. Each time I do, I wonder what else I as a Canadian can possibly do to prevent this outrage from happening. They remind me so much of the signs that we used to hear about and think so

smugly that they belonged to a different age: the signs in Shanghai on the Bund erected by the British colonial government or the American government that said "No dogs or Chinese allowed"; the same kinds of signs that we see in our history books from the past; and the cartoons that are printed in this book. Yet we are still seeing them today.

The true measure of the importance of this motion is not only the redress for those elderly citizens who did so much to build our country, but also the healing and the message that it will send to the rest of the country that our society simply doesn't tolerate that kind of attitude. I will support the motion. I will listen with interest to other members.

. . . .

V. ANDERSON: It is my privilege to stand with others in this House in support of this motion of redress directed to the federal government. As we all have said, it is a motion which is long overdue, and the reasons for it have been given here again and again today.

As I think back into my youth, the meeting place for us in our communities in small town Saskatchewan was again and again the restaurant one or other of them in the town, depending which one would still allow us to come in. Basically, the restaurants that welcomed us were run by Chinese gentlemen. Over the years, as children, we always wondered why it was only gentlemen that were in those restaurants. There were never any others, just the Chinese gentlemen themselves.

It was only in later years that I discovered that it was because of just what we are talking about today that they were there by themselves. They were able to maintain themselves, and most of them lived very quietly at the back of the restaurant or above the restaurant, because as we discovered in later years, the money they earned from that restaurant was sent back to their families in China, families that were not allowed to join them, families that were not allowed to come or to share with them; and if they were to return to visit their families, they would not be allowed to come back and earn the funds that were so necessary for the keep of their families.

They were very devoted and excellent gentlemen over all the years. When I return to Nipawin even today, where do I go but to the restaurant run by some of those same Chinese gentlemen and now by their descendants? My privilege, not so many years ago in southern Saskatchewan, was to have a couple come to me for a wedding, one of whom turned out to be the granddaughter of one of those very same restaurant owners to whose restaurant I had gone as a child and spent so many happy hours. It is that kind of personal interaction with the Chinese or as some of them would like to say, the Canadians of Chinese origin or heritage, rather than Chinese Canadians.... It is interesting how that discussion has changed these days, both in the Chinese and the Japanese communities. Some of them would say, "Yes, I'm a Canadian of Japanese origin" or "I'm a Canadian of Chinese origin," rather than use the hyphenated name. Within their own communities they have the same experience themselves.

Sometimes when we think of redress, we think of the kind of money that we may be paying to people or the kind of physical tokens, and those may have their place. But even more important is the emotional, mental and spiritual sharing that we have with these people so that they might discover that it's not something that we're doing because we feel guilty, which probably we do. Guilt is not a good enough reason to be undertaking a redress action. We must undertake this action because it is an action that rightly belongs to the people we have wronged. It is an action that publicly states that we respect, admire and appreciate them as full and equal and many of them are even more equal than we are in their contribution to Canada. It's that kind of spiritual recognition that we need to be able to offer them. It needs to be not only an act of government on behalf of all of the people but a feeling and an act which affects us in the very way that we live and relate to other people.

One of the concerns that has been expressed and properly so is that this action should be taken because the individuals who paid the original head tax are passing on and their time is short, perhaps, with us. Apart from that, they would be the first to say that it is not only for their benefit but for their children's benefit and their children's children's benefit, because the kind of emotional heritage that you pass on from generation to generation, with the pain, suffering and separation they have shared, is not easily overcome. I'm sure that many of them are not thinking primarily about themselves, but thinking that their children will be able to say: "We have been recognized. Our parents have been recognized, and our parents have been accepted here in the Canadian scene."

When I became involved in politics, it was my privilege to work under the leadership of Art Lee. Art Lee was a Canadian of Chinese origin who was elected as a Member of Parliament for Vancouver East, a community where a great deal of this hurt and uncertainty has been felt over the years. As our hon. member opposite has mentioned, we cannot claim that this kind of thing could not happen again among us. We cannot claim that it could not happen among us unofficially or officially. We must be watchful, we must be careful and we must make sure that not only have we performed an outward act but somehow we have also performed a cleansing that will have a purification within our people right across the country. It is something that is part of us and that we must share.

[12:00]

I rise today to share with the other members of this House not only in committing ourselves to urge the federal government to take an action of redress, but also to urge that we, in our activities within this House, undertake that every action in which we are engaged will be reminded by the history of which we are not proud, so that hopefully, in the generations yet to come, they will not be reading from the Hansard of this House, or from the bills that we have passed, and be able to point out mistakes that have been repeated. Hopefully, they will be able to say that we not only said what we believed, but more importantly, we acted it. I rise to support this redress motion that we might send it quickly to Ottawa for action.

HON. A. HAGEN: I rise to support what is a very strong and emotional debate in our Legislature today. I believe it is timely for us to be looking at this issue of historical discrimination when we are also looking at the future of our country. The trouble we have in considering how the early Chinese residents of our country were treated is very much associated with the history of our country, because the people who came from China to work in this land were working towards its physical unification as many of them helped to build one of the most challenging from an engineering standpoint transportation systems in the world of that day. We know that their work as early citizens although their citizenship was not recognized helped to bring us together from sea to sea.

The length of this historical injustice is also troubling not a century, but three quarters of a century. It's a long time in the young history of our nation. When one then considers that these people were penalized financially and in human terms for coming to this land, we know why it is important for us to act as a nation to deal with healing and, as the member for Vancouver Langara said, with cleansing.

Every time we look at these issues of historical discrimination actions that we are part of as part of the history of our country we're reminded that others have occurred over time, injustices that have been a source of pain to ordinary citizens. We have come to know of these through individual stories and through books written by people who have been able to share their community's pain and experience with us through words. But I believe that only those who live that experience really know it, just as only the people of any group who are disempowered or disabled by history or circumstance can know about that. Addressing these historical injustices is very important for us as an active and considered perspective and action.

In the past we began to recognize that instead of burying it and saying that this is history and instead of ignoring the pain and distress that this causes very significant communities in our country, such as the Chinese community, we must bring those issues to the surface. In fact, as a people we must express our regret and deal with redress.

As a number of people have said today, we must do this not only for those who were directly affected the people who paid the head tax but for the families of those people, who were separated from the men who were husbands and fathers, and for the community of which they are a part. Indeed, we all know that the Chinese community is one for whom family is perhaps its most fundamental value. The nature of family relationships and the support of family is so vital to that community. It's one of the values that they bring to our society, which we know and recognize.

I want to add a personal story, because I find that personal stories very often help to epitomize the issue that we are talking about. I want to tell a story not from the perspective of the man who came here to work and who paid the head tax but from that of his wife and family. Fong Lee is now 82 years of age and was separated from her husband for 31 years because of the exclusion act. For that woman and her family that length of time was like a lifetime. We're dealing with

many lifetimes for those families, as we look at this particular issue and seek action.

The intent of this motion today is for all of us to have an opportunity to bring forward this historic act of discrimination and injustice and to urge and exhort the federal government to deal with the issue in a timely and straightforward manner, to recognize that by giving redress in the form of an action that acknowledges that discrimination to the few survivors of the many thousands who came, they are speaking to the whole community that was directly affected and the community of people who perpetrated those particular acts of discrimination, and by doing so, to achieve healing and reconciliation. We need actions like this.

As the hon. member for Little Mountain said, each generation regrettably relives the need to relearn the lessons of tolerance, understanding and acceptance of all people. There is an act of learning for our children, families and communities that is a part of this expiation, and we are all in need of that to occur so that we are reminded that these instances are not gone from us in terms of our thoughts, deeds and actions. By taking action to acknowledge and redress what happened to a very large number of our early residents, who could not become citizens for far too long a time, we recognize that there is still much to be done, much for us to learn, much for us to do as a responsible, tolerant and harmonious citizenry.

In taking this action today, this House is involved in an act of cleansing, healing and reconciliation that, like the butterflies in Mexico which affect the climate very far away, can affect our acknowledgment of tolerance for the community of men, women and children who make up our province and our country. I know that this motion and this debate serves a purpose that can have a wider meaning, and therefore it is a significant debate in this House today.

E. BARNES: I am almost in awe to enter this debate. I want to say to the member for Vancouver Kensington that he has provided us one of those rare opportunities to discuss a matter that is too often assumed to be beyond the purview of the urgency of business that we are engaged in from day to day. But after listening to the statements made by so many of the members in this Legislature this morning, it struck me that we could do a whole lot better in addressing the concerns that really matter to Canada and to the many peoples from around the world who are relying on us to really think with our hearts as well as our heads.

If we had a Hansard back in the 1885 and 1923 debates.... How interesting were the comments made by the members of the day, who were imposing the Chinese exclusion act, and suggesting ideas about the head tax and means of exploiting the humanity of others for the benefit of the people of the day! I have not seen or heard one person stand this morning and speak against this resolution. That in itself is very significant. Not one person has said one disparaging word about one of the most repugnant eras in our history. Everybody seems to recognize that that was a grave wrong, a reflection upon this society that none of us wants to be associated with at least no one that is in this room this morning. That is very significant to me.

I can recall my own youth. From time to time we talk about things we can relate to from a personal point of view in trying to address issues that were essentially supposed to affect a particular group in society. What we are realizing is that there are no distinctions: no matter what group or religion you are from, when it comes to coexisting, cooperating and living together, making the dreams and ideals of a democratic society a reality is an awesome task.

Many times I sit back and wonder if we have yet discovered the combination of acts and values that is really necessary in order to bring everybody on board so we can relate to the humanizing experiences that others have those people who are of a different race, culture, faith, social or economic status, or are from a different part of the world; who are essentially human beings, but are for some reason different from oneself. To be able to find that common denominator, that common sense of what it takes to bring us together, to make us see why we need to understand that it is essential for us to respect the other person.... It's not that well understood I'm certain of that otherwise we wouldn't have the need to make comments like the member for Vancouver Little Mountain made, which were repeated by the hon. Minister of Education and Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism when she said that we seem to have to repeat experiences that we have gone through in the past as new generations come on stream. The reason is that we have yet to come to grips with our fears and insecurities about our own sense of purpose, our sense of being human beings. We have yet to learn these basic lessons.

[12:15]

With the guidelines that we follow today in our institutions around the world, and as we continue to experiment with the competitive elements in our society in terms of how to achieve the promises that are available to us as individuals, we have yet to find a way to harmonize those virtues. In the process we step on each other, we crush each other, we're insensitive to each other, not because we're innately vicious or indifferent or don't care; but for some reason we think it's necessary for us to protect ourselves or to find our own security. We look for any means by which we can do this.

I'm pretty sure that this was the rationale behind those racist laws. I'm pretty sure that my forefathers those who came before me many hundreds of years ago to this country, to this land were part of an economic strategy as slaves. Make no mistake about it. It wasn't just the whites who had slaves; black people had slaves as well. There were slaves in this country. There were slaves in the United States. Black people were selling their own people, trying to stay alive. I only say that because when we start to talk about what the problem is although it's racism; there's no question about it the question is: which came first? The need to survive and exploitation, to the point that we set a standard; we established a purview or a sense of what was right and what was wrong, based on what was practised. A lot of people will say that they're not racist, because they don't understand what racism is.

This morning we are opening the debate at a level that I'm sure every single person in this chamber and in the community will understand. Everybody has a personal point of view on this. My dream is



that each and every individual.... Believe me, I have a hard time finding anybody who hasn't got a grievance of some sort, who is not being discriminated against for some reason or another, whether it's because of their gender and we all know that we've done a lot of work on that in this House because of their physical condition or mental health, because they're in a wheelchair, or whatever. Now we've got genetic engineering. There may be a whole new wave of discrimination once we get into this DNA business of determining what a person's characteristics might be. This is the thing we've got to look at.

As a species on this earth, we are one and the same. But for some reason we've gone off in a series of directions, which has made that complex and has compounded our problems. If we're going to stop this thing, we must pass this resolution as an act of faith, as an act of recognizing the wrongs of the past and accepting that we can't change the past but are prepared to act, to be open and honest about the fact that our eyes were closed to the damage we were really doing.

It's no different than most of the initiatives that we have to deal with today. Our Minister of Environment, who is a very caring, decent human being, is trying to make some changes through his legislation. Look at the awesome problems he's having trying to tell us that we've been putting garbage in our environment and that we can't afford to do it any more. At the time that we invented plastics and other synthetics, we were able to get rid of more traditional ways and come up with these quick, overnight deals, where we had fast foods, and you name it. Everything was happening: quick packaging.... Now we're looking back and saying: "Hold it. We can't do that. There's a price."

There's a price when you offend another human being too. We realize that now. That's why we're all in accord here today. We all know that we must pay for our actions. We cannot expect to have a united Canada. We cannot expect people to strive to make those dreams a reality, those dreams that we believe a democracy can give us, as long as we have people who feel oppressed, left out and denied, and who feel that they don't have an opportunity, and who know that they're going to be exploited by someone who has more advantage than they do. That's the problem, and that's what we've got to get across to our young people in the classroom.

This is why we must stop having our PhDs and our MAs go on to higher positions of administration in the system. That's why they've got to stay in the grass roots, in the classroom. They've got to stay with the preschool age. We've got the people who know what they're doing and who understand what personal human growth and development are all about. Those are the people that we must put in there, not those who are aspiring to a higher job, who want to make more money. There's a great price we pay for that. We should celebrate those who have time to help the young people understand the awesome task they have in trying to coexist in a society where people are piecing off, dividing and exploiting. That's what this is about today.

I endorse and support the resolution, but I can tell you that's only the beginning. We've got to be able to talk about why we're doing this, why we're looking back that we're learning from the past.

We've got to be able to know that this isn't just an isolated act. This is a profound statement that things have got to be done differently.

We've got to do them better and we can so that we can release the pressure on the legislators. Give them a chance to talk about a better way of doing things, so that we don't have these disparities. As we talk now, I am sure that we are probably committing some other offences without even knowing about them. So we've got to have more time to think about the impact on the lives of people. That's what it's all about, you know.

I want to thank the member for Vancouver Kensington. In fact, I think it's appropriate for me to thank my constituents, because out of all the years I've been an MLA, I can't think of any time when I have been more proud to be here in this building. Having won the last election, I am now in a position to be part of this very special occasion. I thank everybody, and I want to congratulate everyone for their contribution. It is something we all can be proud of.

S. HAMMELL: I will be brief. The member for Vancouver Burrard spoke much of what was on my mind. I am rising in support of the motion, and I want to reiterate my colleague from Vancouver Kensington's position that we are not here to linger on the faults of our early politicians or pioneers, but to pay tribute to the Chinese community of our province, who prevailed despite intense discrimination and hardship, and built this province with the people of our first nation and immigrants from all over the world. As a child of those early pioneers, I want to do my part to right that wrong and to acknowledge that the imposition of the Chinese head tax was not a proud part of our history. I therefore want to join those in this House with like minds to urge the government of Canada to apologize to the Chinese community and to offer appropriate redress.

L. KROG: I think I can reflect on the words of the Deputy Speaker this morning in saying that this is an historic occasion in this chamber. It's one of those moments, as I look around this chamber, when I am very proud to be part of this assembly. I'm proud to be among a group that has spoken so eloquently about an issue that is long and you will pardon the pun an issue that needed redressing in this province and in this country.

I'm going to speak somewhat personally about the resolution before the House, because I have the honour of representing a portion of a city that is one of the oldest in this province. What I say is not only on behalf of myself but also of the member for Nanaimo, Mr. Lovick. I will begin by saying that if you go to the provincial museum in Nanaimo, the city museum down by the waterfront, there is a small memorial at the base of a cliff. If you turn around and look straight across, out into the Strait of Georgia, you will see Protection Island. Protection Island is a lovely little place dotted with cottages; again, like the city itself, it is historic and old. You will see there Gallows Point, where the first recorded judicially sanctioned hanging of any British Columbian took place a long time ago.

What you will not see is that beneath that island is a grave, a mine. The greatest mining disaster in the history of Nanaimo occurred

under that island. The names of many of the victims are recorded approximately half of them but half the victims of that great disaster are unknown. Those are the Chinese who worked in that mine along with the Caucasians, the Slavs and the people from Newcastle and Scotland. Yet in that same community farther up the street is a restaurant, the Rendezvous. It's one of the oldest restaurants in Nanaimo. It is run by the Wong family. They have been in business in Nanaimo for a long, long time as long as I can remember and as long as my grandmother remembered. They have contributed, as have other Chinese Canadians, much to the city I represent. They have given to the community not only in their entrepreneurial spirit but also in the quality of the product they have served to the community as part of their business. They have worked hard in the social agencies, and have done that without resentment.

I can remember, as a little boy in Nanaimo, walking streets and seeing what was then a fairly significant Chinatown, as they used to call them. A number of British Columbian communities had them. I, like one of the members earlier, was sort of curious as to why I saw all these old men, never accompanied by their wives, never accompanied by children. As I grew older, I knew why. I learned the same lesson. I learned of the unspeakable horrors of the society that systematically, through its legal process, through its political process, discriminated in a base and vile way against people simply on the basis of their colour, and because it was feared that they would take away jobs.

It was in every sense of the word a prime example of the exploitation of the working classes, pitting one group of people against another for the economic benefit of some. There are, as the hon. member for Vancouver Kensington explained, only a couple of hundred people left. The bill was repealed in 1923. At best, those still alive are in their eighties and their nineties, perhaps past 100. Surely in 1992, as a first step, as a cleansing of the conscience of the people of this province, we can unanimously pass this resolution. We should not simply pass it, but should appoint some of our members to carry on working with the federal government of this country in a very direct way, to finally make good and to finally redress this evil. Then to harken back to what I said when I first spoke in this Legislature

I can look people of Chinese ancestry in this country straight in the eye without feeling that continuing sense of shame, knowing that there are among us Canadians who paid a special price, not just in money, but a very special and awful price to enjoy the citizenship that came to me as easily as the paper arrives in my office every morning.

[12:30]

I feel very strongly about this. I think of the history of this province. No one has read the history of the building of the railway that my friend alluded to without being conscious that, quite literally, the track of that great railroad, which bound this country together, which helped bring this very province into Confederation, was greased with the blood of the Chinese. Cumberland, a tiny community represented by the hon. member for Comox Valley, was the largest Chinese settlement north of San Francisco. This province's history is rich with Chinese culture and the contribution of the Chinese. What surprises me is that it has taken so long for this Legislature to

arrive at a day where a motion like this could be presented and would receive the support of everyone in the House. It has taken a long time.

It is with a sense of the cleansing of our collective conscience as British Columbians that I rise today and pray that this House will unanimously pass this resolution.

A. WARNKE: The original statement by the member for Vancouver Kensington was most eloquent, in my opinion. He clearly outlined the historical background of discrimination against those of Chinese descent who immigrated to this country. I must admit at the outset that before coming to the chamber, I was naturally very interested in my friend from Vancouver Kensington. I was tempted to say not one word, but just to support the amendment. But essentially I want to congratulate him on his statement. I must admit that as I listened to his remarks, there was tremendous wisdom that all of us should take note of.

There is another element that I'd like to draw to our attention. Indeed, this was reinforced all the more by some very eloquent remarks by the member for Vancouver Burrard. I couldn't help but think, as I synthesized the remarks of both members, and indeed of all members throughout this Legislature, that while it appears easy for this generation to reflect on previous generations the member for Vancouver Burrard put it most eloquently for that generation in the past there were reasons. We totally disagree with the actions and the sentiments expressed by previous generations. It is all so easy to see the mistakes of previous generations and to question their legacy. I must admit, as I was paying close attention to the member for Vancouver Kensington, that I could not help but think that in his review of history, of the various provincial governments and indeed of the federal government, who were stimulated to pass legislation or, as the member pointed out, if not to pass it, certainly to put pressure on the federal government to pass certain kinds of legislation....

So I want to bring to the attention of the House, as I listen to that member and to the member for Vancouver Burrard, who finally really drove it home for me, that we have to look at our own generation. I cannot but help think, as I review that history outlined, that we have a problem with the present Immigration Act. We have a problem, as provincial governments right now want some input and some control and some definition of immigration policy. As I reflect on that history, there is something incredibly wrong here, too. Who are we to suggest that our generation, or perhaps a future generation, as a result of the structuring of our laws and what we are advocating now, or at some point a provincial government might not be tempted to pass discriminatory laws. It is very worthwhile, therefore, to bring this to the attention of all of the members. I cannot help but to synthesize this wisdom and suggest that maybe this is a very good reason for opposing that temptation by provincial governments who want to have total control over immigration.

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G. BREWIN: I feel most humbled to rise in support of the resolution before us today. I don't want to speak for very long, but I

did want to speak, representing Victoria as I do. As a former mayor of Victoria I represented the Chinatown that is part of our community.

Chinatown Victoria is one of the oldest in the province. It has an incredible history that goes back a long way, obviously, but hasn't much been written about. I want to commend to the members of the Legislature if they are interested in the history of some parts of the Chinese community, and some of their struggles, and some of the struggles with the interrelationship between the communities that existed then, as they do today a wonderful little book by a Victoria woman named Marilyn Bowering. The book is called To All Appearances A Lady, and it focuses on society around the turn of the century. It tells the story that we've heard many people speak of here, in terms of the difficulties of the Chinese community to some extent, but also some other parts of this.

There are two particular things I wanted to raise: (1) some of the difficulties that Chinese people here had economically; and (2) the solutions they found. One of the solutions was opium manufacturing. Victoria had at least four manufacturing operations until they were discovered by the then Minister of Finance in 1906, who promptly passed some regulations to ban them. Of course, it was the right thing to have done. But many Chinese unrecognized in this community, unable to respond or to participate in the community found themselves working in this field. Others tried to run businesses and to live with their families, and others without their families here. Opium was a major activity in the Victoria area back then, and I can point to a place where there now stands a hotel and where there was a manufacturing operation. Opium was imported from Asia, then manufactured and sent back.

The other part of the story in this wonderful novel talks about two women a Caucasian woman and a Chinese woman their struggle to be friends and how difficult that was for them. A third part is part of the tragedy of the story and part of the tragedy of the Chinese community. There is an island off Victoria that was a leper colony. For one reason or another, the only lepers there were Chinese. One of the women in the book, the Caucasian woman, found herself there on the island, caring for the gentlemen who were there.

All of this is just part of the history that we seek to join forces on today with everyone in this chamber, for which I feel very proud. It's very impressive that we should all come together with the sole purpose in mind to reinstate a balance as best we can and to take that balance to heart, so that we can recognize the need in this community and in Canada for people of many nationalities from many cultures.

Others have said it better than I, but one of the things we have to recognize in ourselves is that we must stop having difficulty with our need for immigration. There is a segment of our community that somehow doesn't recognize all of the ramifications and the need for immigration that we have. It isn't just for workers, because that is repetitious of what has happened in the past our insatiable need for workers. We go everywhere, but when we bring them here, we somehow don't accept them altogether. We don't quite want them here, and we have to get past that.

As a society and as representatives of our community in this Legislature, I think we have to recognize the role that we play as leaders in our community to help integrate the many nationalities that will come to our country, to our shores and to British Columbia in the years ahead, for there will be many more coming here. So we must take that lesson from the past.

Our action today is a very important one, and we must personally carry that message to our own communities, so that this does not happen again.

[The Speaker in the chair.]

U. DOSANJH: Hon. Speaker, obviously we have dealt today with an issue of very fundamental importance. When I was speaking myself and listening to others, as others have mentioned, I was also thinking about what we face in Canada today.

I was thinking of the historic injustices other than the Chinese head tax for example, the Japanese Canadian issue that the hon. member for Mission Kent spoke of this morning, the Italian Canadian issue during the Second World War, the German Canadian issue during the Second World War and the Ukrainian Canadian issue interned and stripped of their fundamental rights in 26 different camps across the country. I also thought of the ship filled with Jewish refugees that came to the shores of Canada straight from Germany, and it being turned away. I also thought about the Komagata Maru anchored off Vancouver harbour for many days, and then turned back under the shadow of guns from a Canadian ship. I also thought about the Iraqi Canadians who during the Gulf crisis were followed and spied upon by our the national agency, CSIS. I also thought about the reflection of the tensions from south of the border into Toronto and Vancouver, and my mind went back to the events in Nova Scotia of approximately a year ago. I also thought about the picture on the front page of one of the recent issues of Maclean's as I was going through this chamber a fellow member had it on one of the desks. It had the picture of a young black man, and it read: "Young, black and angry."

If we don't deal with some of those injustices, including the Chinese head tax and the Chinese exclusion act injustice, we will have many angry faces on many more issues of other magazines in years to come. We can't afford to have that reality and those occurrences repeated on the beautiful soil and land of this country. This is a wonderful place, and we can make it an egalitarian and more compassionate, more caring and more equality oriented society.

[12:45]

I'm sure this is not the first time this Legislature has discussed issues such as this. As the saying goes in the legal world from where I come, one has to be detached emotionally when talking about these issues. When one puts emotion into the debate, one is usually accused of making an argumentum ad hominem which is making an appeal to the human emotion. But when we're dealing with historic injustices and the actual issue that's going to face us in years to come as the face of Canada is changing it's becoming more multicoloured, multicultural

and multiethnic.... If we do not deal with some of the fundamental errors of our past and deal with them today and not tomorrow, we will face this recurring reality, and we would have no one else to blame but ourselves.

In closing, I say that it's important for those of us who control the reins of power, either provincially or federally, to be generous. It's important for those of us who control the reins of power to be just and to be fair and to not fear going into the past and bringing out these injustices and looking at them openly and inquisitively, so that we can go into the depths of our consciences and deal with the issues that we have to deal with so that we can make Canada and British Columbia a more just society.

In asking for support on this resolution unanimous support, I hope I will simply read you two lines from Emerson, my favourite chap. He says: "In our condition of universal dependence, it seems heroic to let the petitioner be the judge of his necessity and to give all that is asked, though at great inconvenience." It is not inconvenient to provide adequate redress on the Chinese head tax and exclusion act issue. I'm certain that you will join me today and you have in terms of the speaking in saying to the federal government that it is in fact convenient, that it is just and equitable and fair, and that it is mandatory for us, if we want to stand tall as human beings and as politicians, to provide that long overdue redress.

Motion approved unanimously on a division.

HON. G. CLARK: A rare occasion for this House. May there be many more. I'll just advise members of the House and staff that the House will be sitting until 10 p.m. on Tuesday next week. And I can advise you in advance, if you like, that the House will also be sitting on Wednesday.

With that, hon. Speaker, I wish all hon. members a restful weekend for work again next week.

Hon. G. Clark moved adjournment of the House.

Motion approved.

The House adjourned at 12:56 p.m.

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