

MOTION

2. Komagata Maru Apology and Remembrance Day Proclamation

At the Council meeting on June 9, 2020, Council referred the following motion to the Standing Committee on City Finance and Services meeting on June 10, 2020, in order to hear from speakers.

Submitted by: Councillor Swanson

WHEREAS

1. On May 23, 1914, three hundred and seventy-six British Subjects from India of Sikh, Muslim and Hindu origin arrived in Vancouver Harbour aboard the Komagata Maru, seeking to enter Canada;
2. On July 23, 1914, the Komagata Maru was forced to leave as a result of a discriminatory act by the Government of Canada, without allowing the passengers to disembark;
3. On May 23, 2008, at the request of the Descendants of the Komagata Maru Society, the BC Government apologized for the events of May 23, 1914, stating that “The House deeply regrets that the passengers, who sought refuge in our country and our province, were turned away without benefit of the fair and impartial treatment befitting a society where people of all cultures are welcomed and accepted”;
4. On May 18, 2016, at the request of the Descendants of the Komagata Maru Society, the Canadian Government apologized for the events of May 23, 1914, stating that it was sorry for its indifference and discriminatory laws, and that it was committed “to positive action – to learning from the mistakes of the past, and to making sure that we never repeat them”;
5. The City of Vancouver is committed to protecting British Columbians from hate, racism, and discrimination through legislation, education, and example;
6. The City of Vancouver is home to many diverse cultures where individuals can practice their beliefs and customs while respecting and learning from other traditions;
7. The City of Vancouver promotes multiculturalism and the full and free participation of all individuals in society; and
8. Vancouver Mayor Truman Baxter organized an anti-Asian rally, and the first speaker was the prominent politician H.H. Stevens. “I have no ill-feeling against people coming from Asia personally,” he told the crowd, “but I reaffirm that the national life of Canada will not permit any large degree of immigration from Asia...I intend to stand up absolutely on all occasions on this one great

principle—of a white country and a white British Columbia.”
(http://www.vancouverhistory.ca/archives_komagatamaru.htm
[vancouverhistory.ca])

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council formally apologizes for the previous Council’s injustices and their cruel effects on individuals and families impacted by the Komagata Maru incident.

- B. THAT The City of Vancouver declare, by proclamation, that May 23rd shall be known as “Komagata Maru Remembrance Day” in Vancouver.

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