

ACT 2 END RACISM

July 01, 2020

As Canada celebrates its 153rd birthday with fireworks, we must also acknowledge this day holds another meaning for some Chinese Canadians in history.

Canada's "National Dream" for a railway was realized in 1885, which helped unite and give birth to a nation. The Last Spike ceremony excluded the Chinese railway workers, who blasted through the Rockies, laid the tracks, and by the thousands, gave their lives. The government then moved to restrict Chinese immigration to Canada with a Head Tax, \$50 in 1885 and \$500 by 1903. In 1923, Parliament passed the Chinese Exclusion Act excluded Chinese immigrants from entering the country. This law passed on Canada Day became known as "Humiliation Day" for the Chinese community. The racist legislation was repealed in 1947.

While there is indeed much to celebrate on Canada Day, we should also take the time to reflect and on historical wrongs and racism that form an integral part of Canada. We must continue to acknowledge the devastating impact of Residential Schools on Canadas Indigenous Peoples, the demolition of Africville in Nova Scotia, the Komagata Maru and Canada's past Anti-Indian Immigration Policies, the Internment of Japanese Canadians in the Second World War,

While fear and hatred against the Chinese or "Yellow Peril" has resurfaced with racist attacks throughout Canada during COVID-19, we have also seen hope and courage provided by essential workers, especially of Asian origin, in the health, food and service sectors.

We also continue to hear a loud and increasingly vocal and global movement fighting to dismantle systemic racism. We see protesters worldwide continuing to fight for justice after the murder of George Floyd along with other Black lives lost. Indigenous and other racialized groups are pushing even harder to envision a truly more inclusive community for all Canadians. In that spirit, we have enclosed a link to a National Film Board documentary telling the story of the alternate meaning of Canada Day for Chinese Canadians.

"To know your future, you must know your past". —George Santayana

https://www.nfb.ca/film/in_the_shadow_of_gold_mountain/