

David Tilson MP ? Commemorating the 100th anniversary Komagata Maru incident in Vancouver

Canada is known around the world for valuing pluralism and openness.

Unfortunately, we have not always lived up to these ideals.

This year marks the 100 year anniversary of the arrival of the SS Komagata Maru in Vancouver. The ship carried 376 South Asian passengers seeking a better life in Canada.

These passengers were detained and forcefully denied entry into Canada due to discriminatory policies that restricted immigration from certain countries.

The incident is truly an unfortunate chapter in Canadian history.

In 2008, our government secured a unanimous motion in Parliament to recognize the Komagata Maru tragedy and to apologize to those who were directly affected. Soon after, on behalf of Canadians, Prime Minister Stephen Harper officially recognized this historic event and apologized to the passengers and those affected by the tragic Komagata Maru incident.

In reference to the Komagata Maru incident, Prime Minister Harper emphasized that, ?We cannot change the events of the past; we cannot undo the misdeeds committed against those long deceased. But we can bring Canadians together in the present to unite our country, and to set us on a course to accomplish greater things in the future.?

This is why, as we look back on this incident, it serves as an important reminder of our collective responsibility to vehemently oppose the spirit of intolerance and discrimination embedded in the immigration policies at that time that fueled this tragedy.

To acknowledge this unfortunate event, our government committed \$2.5 million to the Indo-Canadian community for projects to commemorate the Komagata Maru incident. We supported the construction of the Komagata Maru monument in Vancouver, prominently located in Harbour Green Park in close proximity to where the ship was anchored in 1914. This May, Prime Minister Harper will unveil a commemorative Canada Post stamp. This stamp was suggested by MP Parm Gill and will help commemorate the 100th anniversary of the tragedy.

Together, we are recognizing our past and recommitting to upholding the values of freedom, democracy and rule of law

