

### *Canadian Culture*

If members of this House of Commons find it difficult to believe there could be such a law as a head tax, they should also know that in 1923 the Chinese exclusion act was proclaimed. The act was so tough only a handful of Chinese entered Canada between 1923 and 1946. They were excluded from Canada. As a result, the total population of Chinese in Canada dwindled from over 46,000 in 1931 to under 35,000 in 1941. Chinese customers were refused service in so-called decent restaurants, not permitted to buy a home in the so-called good districts and were disqualified from taking up any professional training.

Very few non-Chinese challenged this racism. I am very proud of the fact that the forerunner of my New Democratic Party, the CCF party, did advocate the vote for the Chinese Canadians. I am sad to say the Liberals and the Conservatives of that day ran advertisements in the Vancouver newspapers saying: "A vote for the CCF is a vote for the Chinaman." As a matter of fact, in the *Daily Province* newspaper of Monday, October 7, 1935, the following ad appeared:

50,000 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! A vote for a Liberal candidate is a vote against Oriental enfranchisement. Vote for your Liberal candidate!

In 1935, on October 10, in the *Daily Province* the Conservatives ran an ad as follows:

50,000 Orientals in British Columbia to whom neither the Conservative nor the Liberal party will give the vote. But, there are 40,000,000 Orientals in Japan who threaten Canada's workers and industry. Vote Conservative!

I personally believe that this, along with the deportation of Japanese Canadians, was the low point in Canadian political history. Let me make it clear; I do not suggest for one minute that members in this House of the parties represented here would follow those lines today, and I am inviting members of these parties to support this resolution today.

But the Chinese, with a sense of endurance, a respect for the law and their increased knowledge of the local community, survived the political persecution and gradually gained the support of the rest of the community. At first, however, the Chinese fell back to protect themselves. The organization that did this was the Chinese Benevolent Association, first registered as a non-profit organization in 1906 in Vancouver. The CBA was needed to protect the Chinese, provide for their needs, defend their interests and promote the general welfare of the Chinese people. In 1907 when the B.C. school board decided to bar Chinese school children from the public schools, the CBA built a school of its own. As Pat Chen, writing in the *Ubysey* in an article entitled "Chinatown Fight", dated September 28, 1978, pointed out, during the race riots when some 30,000 bigots rampaged through Chinatown, the CBA demanded compensation from the Canadian government, petitioned against such unfair laws as the head tax and, during the depression, provided food, bedding, transit, and medicine for the old and sick.

In 1939 when Canada joined in World War II, in spite of the dismal record of discrimination toward them Chinese people rallied to the support of their adopted country and

many enlisted in the armed forces. After the war, the Chinese exclusion act was repealed and Canadians of Chinese descent were enfranchised by the federal government in 1947 and by the B.C. provincial government in 1949.

From 1946, with the change of immigration law, Chinese Canadians were able to bring in their long-estranged wives and children—many after 20-25 years of separation. In 1967 we saw the end of Canada's openly discriminatory immigration laws. Asians were finally treated as equals to Europeans. From 1967 to 1975 another significant influx of Chinese immigrants came to Canada from many parts of the world, with a large component from Hong Kong. Included in this group were a large number with strong financial resources, professional and technical skills and good personal assets.

Much of this history of the Chinese in Canada is taken from a lecture by Dr. K. C. Li of Vancouver, reprinted in the March 18, 1980, issue of *Chinatown News*. Dr. Li notes that today Canadians of Chinese origin are part of the mosaic of this country. They are represented in every walk of life, including the professional fields. The greater number that remain in the traditional trades, such as grocers, vegetable farmers, laundresses, skilled and unskilled labourers and restaurant operators, now work under better conditions than before. Chinese are scattered all over the country, although they still prefer to live in urban areas, particularly Vancouver and Toronto. The 1971 census recorded about 118,000 Chinese Canadians in the country with 44,000 in British Columbia. An updated figure suggests there may now be approximately 200,000 Chinese in the country.

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Although the days of race riots, head taxes and harsh discrimination are thankfully over, Canada is still a prejudiced society. On behalf of the Chinese community, I raised in the House of Commons a short time ago the matter of the CTV network program "W-5", which in a televised program entitled "Campus Giveaway" portrayed Canadian students of Chinese origin as foreign students who were receiving a free education at the expense of Canadians. The program said that Chinese Canadians were taking up the space of Canadian students in universities. In the program were pictures of students who were, in effect, Canadian citizens. Of course, the viewers did not know otherwise and assumed these people to be foreigners.

Later CTV admitted that the program was "racist in tone and inaccurate in information". May I tell hon. members of this House that I talked to a Canadian-born lawyer of Chinese ancestry whose daughter was attending Simon Fraser University. This lawyer had switched from medicine to law to become one of the first Chinese Canadian lawyers. Now, a generation later, he feels for his daughter, who could easily be stereotyped a foreign student because of that TV program. This is simply unacceptable in Canada in the 1980s.

Last year, again on behalf of the Chinese community, I raised in the House of Commons communications committee the matter of the National Film Board film "Bamboo, Lions and Dragons". It was a portrait of the Chinese community in