

In concluding, I want to say that while I accept the concept of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, I think it is important to see what kind of concrete policies will come out of the foundation. Let us hope that this time, the Conservative government will make a real contribution to the unity of this country.

[English]

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to stand today to speak on Bill C-63, an act to establish the Canadian Race Relations Foundation. We support this proposal to establish a race relations foundation in Canada, which was a part of the Japanese Canadian redress settlement. We must remember, as we debate this bill, the terrible injustices that were perpetrated against Canadians of Japanese origin during World War II. I want to take just a moment to quote from one of the summaries of the Council of Japanese Canadians.

Between 1941 and 1949 the Canadian government forced 21,000 Canadian residents of Japanese ethnic origin from their homes, confined most in detention camps, sold off all their real and personal property, and forced them to scatter across Canada or to be shipped to war-torn Japan. Over 17,000 of those victimized by the Canadian government were Canadian citizens. The government claimed that this denial of the civil and human rights of these Canadians was necessary to ensure Canada's security.

Today, government documents show this claim to be completely false. They show that the treatment of Japanese Canadians during and after the Second World War was motivated by racism and political opportunism.

They show ministers of the Crown used their emergency powers to achieve a political objective: the destruction of the Japanese Canadian community in British Columbia.

This is to the shame of all Canadians. For 42 years, victims who were scattered across Canada, families that were broken up and scattered because of these atrocities, tended to internalize their feelings of hurt and humiliation, while many Canadians added shame and stigma to these wounds. Their community in British Columbia, and in my riding of Vancouver East which was the heartland of the Japanese Canadian community, was never re-established.

In the early 1940s, CCF members of Parliament, particularly Angus MacInnis from British Columbia, spoke out against these injustices. They in turn received much abuse. The NDP continued to call for an end to the War Measures Act and continued to press for the

Government Orders

need for an official apology and redress for these great injustices.

Prior to the last election and following the earlier United States settlement, the Government of Canada finally took action, and we supported it. Along with an official statement from the Prime Minister acknowledging the injustices, modest individual settlements were made to survivors. There was a commitment to fund community activities and \$24 million for a new Canadian Race Relations Foundation was approved.

I was present at a number of gatherings of Japanese Canadians. They celebrated the redress and commemorated the events of the 1940s in such a way as to ensure that these injustices would never be forgotten or repeated. I was very moved by the feelings that showed in the faces of elders. I remember so many of the older women, who were undoubtedly widows by this time, sitting quietly around the walls of a large room. It showed in their faces that their pride was restored. The misplaced guilt, which we as a country imposed on them, was assuaged.

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Their children and grandchildren, who are leaders in our communities today, had fought hard for justice and for redress. They established a very strong organization, the National Council of Japanese Canadians.

We must continue to recall this and other acts of racism and discrimination in our past, as well as in our recent history. It is important to do this in order to prevent such acts from ever recurring and to make people think more about the racist attitudes that are all too prevalent today.

On March 21 I said:

History shows that racism has been a sickness in Canadian society and is a cancer that is growing. In 1914 East Indians on the *Komagata Maru*, who were British subjects seeking refuge, were turned away at the Port of Vancouver.

Jews were refused sanctuary on our eastern shores in 1939 and many died in concentration camps. In 1885 racist legislation imposed a head tax on Chinese immigrants, followed in 1923 by an Immigration Act to exclude Chinese immigration altogether, and men who had built our railroads were isolated and deprived of rights.

They were deprived of having their families in Canada.

Blacks who settled in Nova Scotia—