

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4719
ANSWERED ON:25.08.2010
KOMAGATA MARU TRAGEDY
Badal Harsimrat Kaur

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has taken up the issue of Komagata Maru tragedy of 1914 with the Canadian Government; and
(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Canadian Government thereto?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA)

(a) & (b) In 2006, the Canadian Prime Minister referred to the Komagata Maru incident as an important event in Canadian history and one that must be properly recognized, stating, "Government of Canada acknowledges the Komagata Maru incident and we will soon undertake consultations with the Indo-American community on how best to recognize this sad moment in our history."

The Canadian Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, Jason Kenny announced, in May 2008, that the Canadian Government was taking steps to acknowledge and commemorate the tragedy. He announced that the Indo-Canadian community would be able to apply for up to Canadian \$ 2.5 million in grants and contributions funding to commemorate the Komagata Maru incident.

On August 3, 2008 the Canadian Prime Minister, at the 13th Annual "Ghabri Babiyan Da Mela" festival in Surrey, British Columbia province, issued an apology for the Komagata Maru incident stating, in response to the House of Commons motion calling for an apology by the Government, "On behalf of the Government of Canada, I am officially conveying, as Prime Minister, that apology".

On May 23, 2008 the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia (a province in Canada) unanimously passed a resolution apologizing for Komagata Maru incident of 1914. The text of their resolution is placed below.

British Columbia apology for Komagata Maru

The exact text of the motion reads:

Province of British Columbia

Official Report of

Debates of the Legislative Assembly

2008 Legislative Session: 4th Session, 38th Parliament, Friday, May 23, 2008

B.C Government, Motion No 62 - Motion of Apology

Komagata Maru: Motion Unanimously Approved

‘Be it resolved that this Legislature apologizes for the events of May 23, 1914, when 376 passengers of the Komagata Maru, stationed off the Vancouver harbour, were denied entry by Canada. 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.’

Under the leadership of Preimer Gordon Campbell, the province of British Columbia is the first province in Canada to issue an apology for the Komagata Maru events of May 23, 1914 on the 75th anniversary of that May date, the city of Vancouver under his Worship Mayor Gordon Campbell, was the first city in Canada to place a plaque in remembrance of those that were wronged. In 2006, the government issued a statement of regret and this year we were to pass this important motion.

Signed by Gordon Campbell, Premier, Province of British Columbia

Signed by Dave S Hayer, M.L.A (Surrey-Tynehead), Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism and Immigration.