



November 17, 2020

Motion for the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) to commemorate Canada's First National Internment Operations (1914-1920)

Mr. Chair,

The Ukrainian Canadian Congress Toronto Branch and its 66 member organizations wholeheartedly support the motion by Trustee Teresa Lubinski, that the TCDSB acknowledge the year 2020, as the 100th anniversary of the closing of the internment camps in 1920, and adopt October 28 as TCDSB Internment Commemoration Day in Canada.

On October 28, Canadians from many backgrounds commemorated Canada's First National Internment Operations – the forced internment of 8,579 Ukrainians and other Europeans who were branded 'enemy aliens' and sent to 24 internment camps across Canada between 1914 and 1920.

The camp internees were used to develop the Canadian infrastructure as "forced-labourers". They were used to develop Banff National Park, the logging industry in Northern Ontario & Quebec, the steel mills in Ontario & Nova Scotia, and in the mines in British Columbia, Ontario & Nova Scotia. This infrastructure development program was so beneficial to Canadian corporations that the internment program lasted for two years after the end of the war.

The effect of internment was devastating to the internees, their friends and families, and had a lasting impact on the Ukrainian community as a whole in Canada.

Men, women, and children suffered during Canada's First National Internment Operations, not because of anything they had done, but only because of who they were and where they had come from.

Let us remember the victims of this injustice and bring an end to prejudice and discrimination, wherever they may appear.

Peter Schturyn

President