

Canada to 1919:

Immigration and Racism

A. Background

- ▶ Prime Minister Macdonald
- ▶ **National Policy** – achieved 2 parts
 - he built the CPR
 - encouraged industrialization in the east
 - settlement of the west was not completed
- ▶ 1896 to 1913 - great wave of immigration to Canada: 3 million people
- ▶ Excluded
 - Africans,
 - Asians,
 - East Indians
 - southern and eastern Europeans
- ▶ Thought they would not be good farmers
- ▶ Not easily **assimilated into white, protestant culture**

B. Canada's Response to Immigration

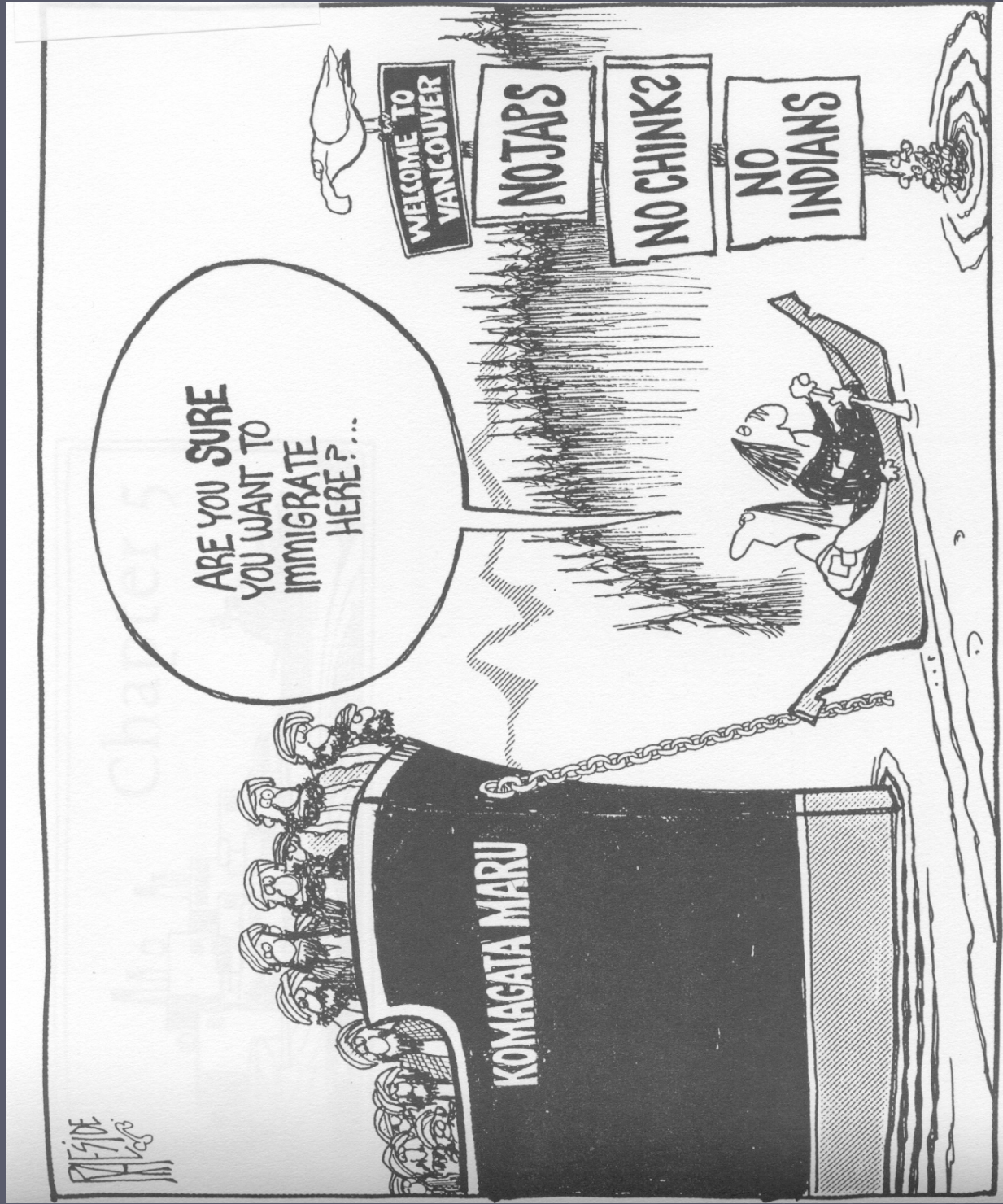
- ▶ Immigration policies discriminated on a basis of **origin** or **race** until 1967
- ▶ 1967 - points system - discriminates on the basis of
 - Skills
 - education
 - Language
 - Age
 - other characteristics

- ▶ in 1907 a race riot occurred in Vancouver, against Asian immigration (Asiatic Exclusion League)
- ▶ rioters feared:
 - large numbers of immigrants – labor competition
 - Asians would work for less money
 - Asians, as good business people, could soon control the economy
- ▶ Asian immigration was cut back
 - ▶ Only 400 Japanese per year
 - ▶ Continuous Passage Law

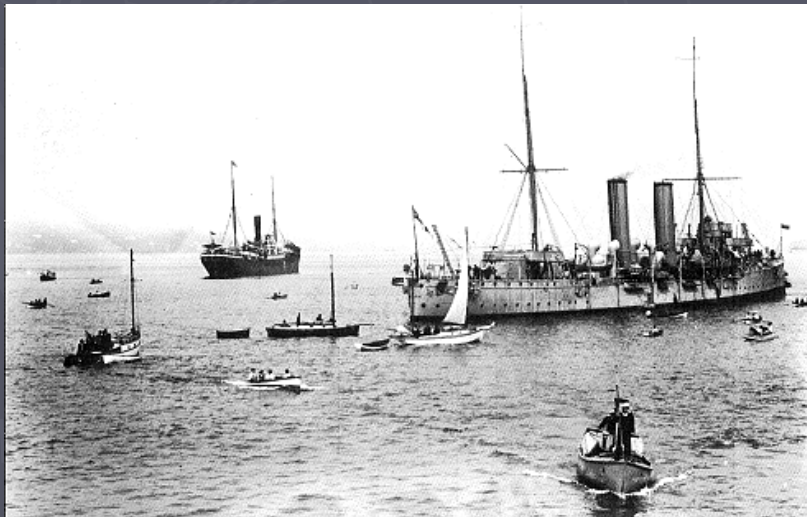


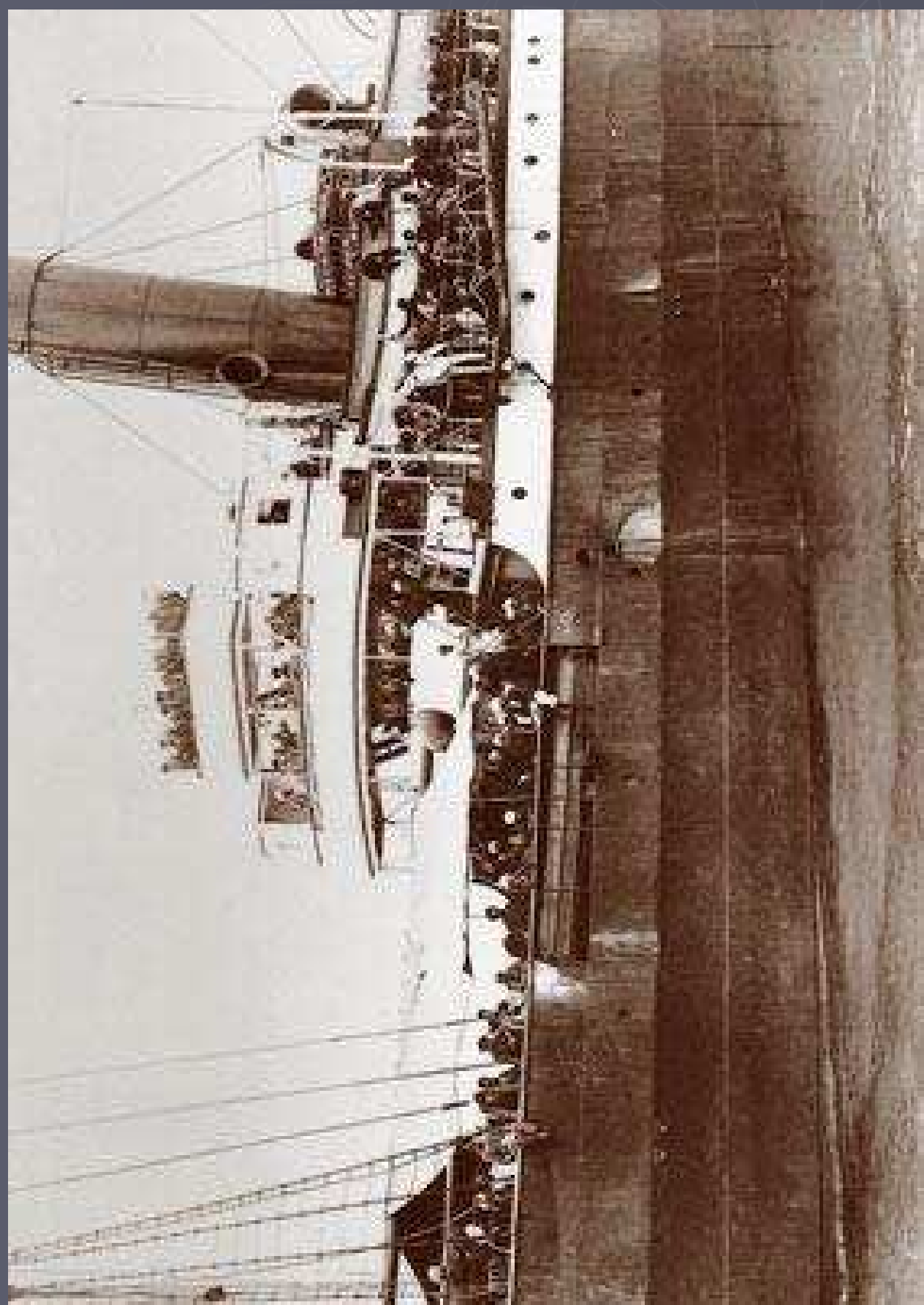


"The same act which Excludes Orientals Should Open Wide the Portals of British Columbia to White Immigrants." Cartoon by N.H. Hawkins, Saturday Sunset. (1907)



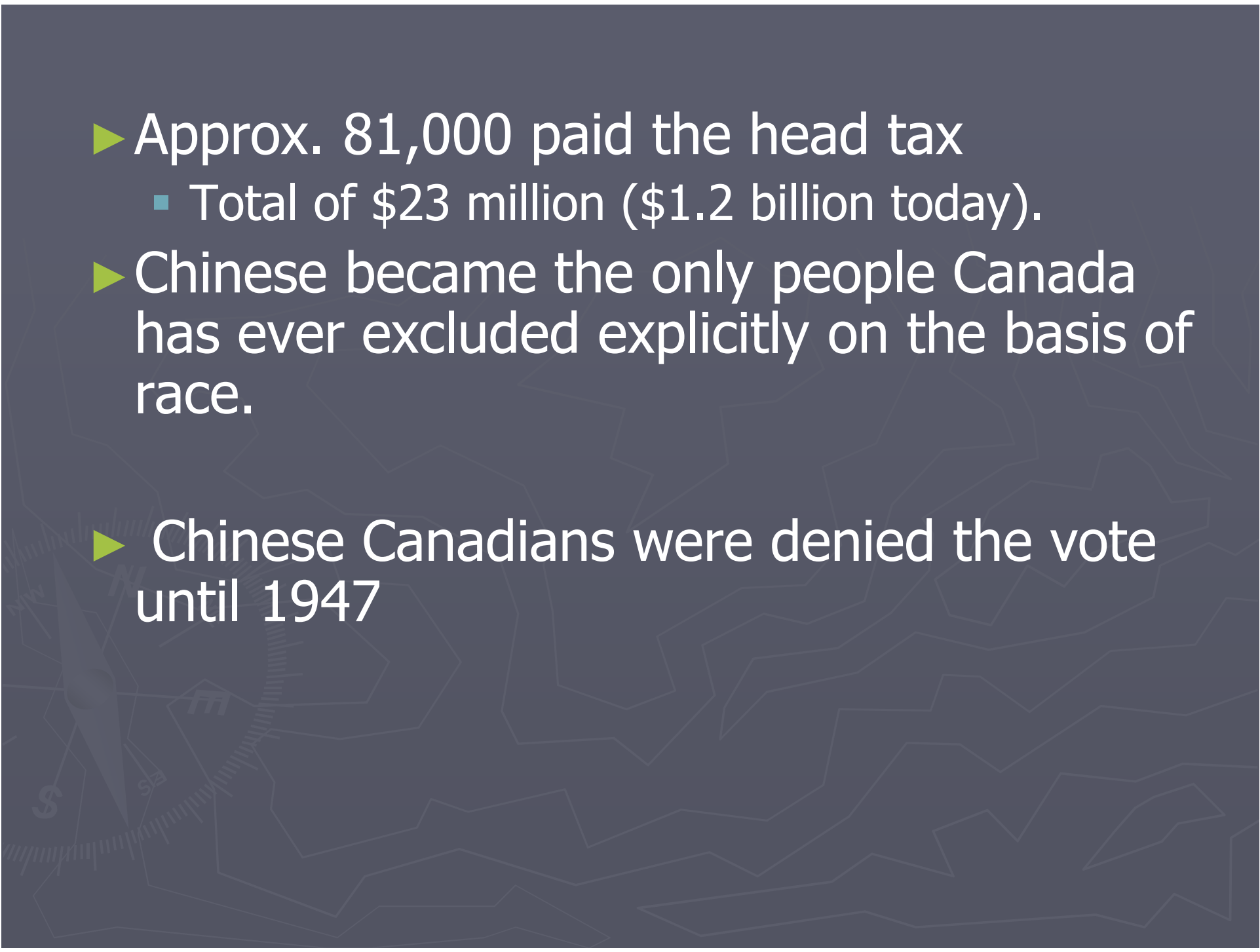
- ▶ In 1914, the Komagata Maru, a shipload of Sikh immigrants, was denied docking at Vancouver
 - ▶ Challenged Continuous Passage law
 - <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0004366>





The Chinese Head Tax

- ▶ Federal tax imposed on immigrants from China between 1885 and 1923.
 - ▶ \$50 in 1885
 - ▶ \$500 in 1903 (the price of a house at the time)
- ▶ 1923 - Chinese Exclusion Act replaces head tax,
- ▶ bars all Chinese immigrants from Canada until 1947.

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- ▶ Approx. 81,000 paid the head tax
 - Total of \$23 million (\$1.2 billion today).
 - ▶ Chinese became the only people Canada has ever excluded explicitly on the basis of race.
 - ▶ Chinese Canadians were denied the vote until 1947

C. The Condition of Canada's First Nations

► Indian Act 1867

- Laws dealing with Indian status, bands and reserves
- Gave gov't power
- Meant to assimilate first nations into European culture
 - Through "enfranchisement"
 - Gain citizenship – give up traditional rights

- As Europeans move west:
 - Aboriginal peoples became more displaced
 - more impoverished
- forced to live on **reserves**
 - **Designated by gov't**
 - often not very good land
 - Much given away by gov't
- expected to farm
 - Bad land
 - Improper equipment
 - Not taught how
- disease and starvation caused a great loss of life



► Gov't allowed churches to set up **residential schools**

- From 1880 - 1970 approx. 130

- **Purpose:**

- to eradicate or assimilate traditional culture and replace it with white-European culture.



- Some children were forceably taken from their parents,
- Taught Christian religion and English at schools
- Some beaten for speaking their own languages
- some physical and sexual abuse from staff



- Traditional culture was made illegal in some cases
- i.e. Government banned **potlatches** on west coast
- i.e. commercial fishing illegal for some
 - Destroyed their economy
 - fishing rights were transferred to whites and their companies



- pillagers and museums looted villages that were emptied by diseases such as smallpox epidemics

- should these artifacts be returned?

