

Holocaust Remembrance Day

Premier Gordon Campbell

April 19, 2004

Check Against Delivery

How do we speak of the unspeakable?

How do we describe the indescribable?

How do we explain the inexplicable?

There are no words.

There are no words to describe the extent of the evil that claimed over 6 million lives.

There are no words to explain the suffering and injustice endured by the victims of the Holocaust.

There are no words to convey the lasting regret and sorrow of the world for our failure to stop it.

We know the truth, we know the facts, we know the history, and still our minds recoil and our hearts break when we try to imagine such horror.

6 million people murdered – one-and-half-times the population of our province today.

6 million children and parents, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, workers, artists, teachers, shopkeepers, craftspeople...

6 million – each one with a name, a family, and a story cut short.

And almost more overwhelming than the loss of life, is the loss of so much human potential – imagine what those 6 million might have given to the world, but for the brutal injustice of hate.

But they have left a legacy – the sorrow of the Holocaust is with us still, and always will be.

It lives in the painful lessons of history, and in the eyes of the Holocaust survivors we are honoured to have with us here today.

The scars you bear and the names you remember compel us all to set our hearts firmly against hate and pledge: “Never again.”

Yet recent events in Ontario and Quebec remind us that we are not free from the shadow of hate

And they remind us that words and promises are not enough. It is not enough to speak against hate – we must also act against hate.

With your support, we have pledged to fund the vital work of the Hate Crime Team in B.C. – to bring to justice any who dare bring hate to our communities.

But fighting it in our courts and in the laws we pass in this house is not good enough.

It must be stopped before it even begins – and that fight begins with each of us.

We are fortunate to share a country that embraces diversity, tolerance, and equality. Our communities thrive on the contribution of every citizen, regardless of race, colour or culture, regardless of religion, gender or creed.

Those are the values we can pass to our children: lessons of tolerance and not intolerance, respect and not disrespect, inclusion and not exclusion.

In doing so, we will ensure that the seeds of hate can not find fertile soil in Canada and that the black vine of hate is never allowed to bear its bitter fruit in our communities.

All across this country, we share an opportunity, a duty and a desire to proclaim with one voice that hate has no place in Canada – to say with conviction that it has no place in our province, in our communities, on our streets, in our schools, in our homes.

In accepting that right, we each accept the duty of casting out hate wherever it appears.

It is our duty to ourselves, to our children, and to those whose suffering we remember today.

To those of you who survived the horrors, fear and scars of the Holocaust, you have our pledge that we will fulfil that duty.

We accept it, and the work it entails.

To do anything less is to fail ourselves and our nation.

I thank you for sharing your memories, your stories and your pain with us, so we can learn from you and move forward together in pursuit of lasting peace.