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**ONE HUNDRED FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY  
CELEBRATION OF CHINESE IN CANADA**

**Statement by:**

**The Honourable Vivienne Poy**

**Tuesday, June 10, 2008**

## THE SENATE

Tuesday, June 10, 2008

### ONE HUNDRED FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF CHINESE IN CANADA

**Hon. Vivienne Poy:** Honourable senators, I rise today to bring your attention to an important celebration that will take place in Victoria on the weekend of August 8, 2008, marking the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Chinese in Canada.

The event will be held in Victoria because the first Chinatown was established there when the Chinese arrived in 1858 lured by the gold rush in British Columbia. At the beginning, the Chinese gold miners came from California and then the rush was on with more arriving from China. That is why California, British Columbia and the State of Victoria in Australia are referred to as “Gold Mountains.”

The next big wave of Chinese migration to Canada started in the 1870s when tens of thousands of Chinese labourers were contracted to lay the tracks for the CPR in order to unite Canada from coast to coast.

Over a century and a half, the Chinese communities in Canada have gone through severe institutional discrimination and great hardships, as well as the exclusion of their family members who wished to join them. Despite everything, the communities have

flourished, and a lot is due to the respect for scholarly pursuits, entrepreneurship and hard work that are entrenched in the Chinese culture.

• (1405)

As Census 2006 reported, the community has grown significantly since the mid-19th century. More than 1.2 million Canadians identified themselves as being of Chinese heritage in 2006, and the census also reaffirmed that Chinese languages are the third mother tongue in Canada, after English and French.

Since the Chinese-Canadian community in Victoria is the oldest in Canada, it is only appropriate that the Victoria Chinese Commerce Association is organizing the celebration during the weekend of August 8. It will feature a gala dinner and a celebration pageant honouring the achievements of Chinese-Canadians, and will depict the historical milestones of the Chinese in Canada over the last 150 years.

Although there is still much more to be done as a minority community in Canada, we know that we have come a long way and that we are very much a part of the future of Canada.

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