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DHALLA MOTION FORCES CONSERVATIVE FLIP-FLOP Conservatives refuse, then promise to support apology for Komagata Maru

Ottawa, ON - After weeks of refusing to support a Liberal motion calling for an official apology for the 1914 Komagata Maru incident, the Conservative government has suddenly decided to move in a different direction.

Over the weekend, Conservative MP Jason Kenney announced that the federal government will deliver an apology for this black mark in Canadian history, when 376 mostly Sikh immigrants were barred from landing in Vancouver and eventually ordered to sail away.

This is in stark contrast to the position taken on April 2, when Liberal MP Ruby Dhalla introduced her Private Member's Motion in the House of Commons. In spite of Dhalla providing "an opportunity for all parliamentarians to put partisan politics aside" by supporting the motion, Conservative MP Michael Chong demonstrated the government's reluctance by stating "at what point do we, as a country, establish a limit for these apologies?"

While supportive of the government's complete reversal of positions, Dhalla is questioning the motives behind the change of heart.

"In consideration of how sensitive and important this issue is, I find the announcement to be nothing more than a political game that the Conservative government is playing" commented Dhalla. "At first Stephen Harper was completely opposed to my motion, yet now in the week before it is to be voted on in the House, the fear of losing the spotlight has prompted action."

"Quite frankly, this is cynical politics at its worst. It is important for the Prime Minister to realize that an apology is the right thing to do for the country, not a tactic to score political points" added Dhalla.

Long before this Conservative flip-flop, Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion committed a future Liberal government to an official apology for the Komagata Maru incident on March 9, 2007.

The Dhalla motion is currently scheduled for debate on Thursday of this week.

"I certainly hope that when this motion is voted on, Mr. Harper will instruct his members to stand up and officially support it in the House, for the entire nation to witness" said

Dhalla.

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