



For immediate release

Commemorating 100 Years of the end of Canada's first national internment operations, 1914-1920.

(Winnipeg) – Saturday, June 20, 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the end of Canada's first national internment operations of 1914-1920.

In total, 8,579 men, women and children – Ukrainians and other Europeans, most of them civilians – were branded as “enemy aliens”, forced to do heavy labour for the profit of their jailers, stripped of what little wealth they had and disenfranchised. The internees were subjected to these state-sanctioned indignities not because of anything they had done wrong but only because of where they had come from and who they were.

In May 2008, representatives of the Canada's Ukrainian community reached an agreement with the Government of Canada providing for the creation of the Canadian First World War Internment Recognition Fund (CFWWIRF) to support commemorative and educational projects intended to remind all Canadians about this episode in our nation's history.

“Recalling Canada's first national internment operations, we are reminded of the need to remain vigilant in the defence of civil rights,” said Andriy Harasymiw, Chair of the Endowment Council (EC) of the CFWWIRF.

“On Saturday, I will be thinking in particular of people like Mary Manko Haskett, who was just 6 years old when – despite being born in Canada – she was transported with the rest of her family, hundreds of kilometres away from Montreal, to an internment camp at Spirit Lake, in Quebec's Abitibi region. Mary asked only that what happened to her, and so many others like her, be remembered, telling us that acknowledgement and symbolic redress should be about memory, not money.”

The EC CFWWIRF encourages all the affected ethno-cultural communities to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of Canada's first national internment operations on 20 June 2020.

“While there are no surviving internees, we have not forgotten them. May their memory be eternal,” Harasymiw concluded.

For more information on the Canadian First World War Internment Recognition Fund contact the Program Manager, Andrea Malysh, at malysh@internmentcanada.ca or toll free at 1-866-288-7931.

www.internmentcanada.ca

