

## 1907 Vancouver Anti-Asian Riots

From 1903 to 1907 there was a downturn in the Canadian economy. This led to increased anger towards Chinese and Japanese **immigrants** in BC. Some people feared Asians would take jobs away from white workers. Asians were willing to work for long hours doing dangerous and dirty work for little pay.



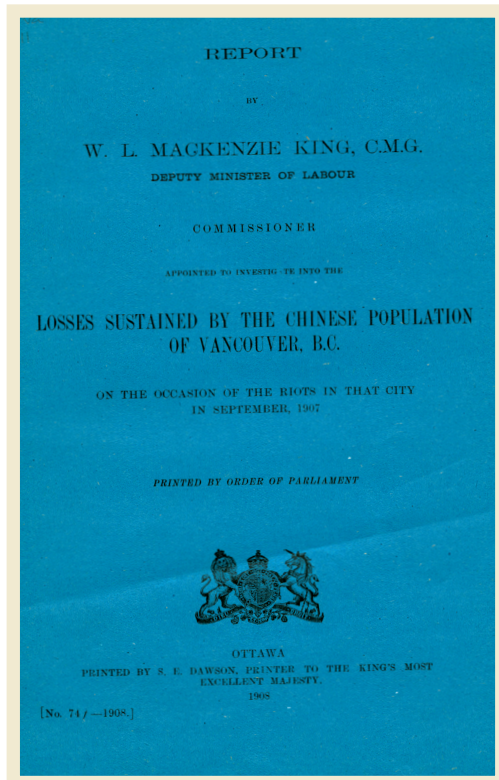
A group of people joined together to form the Asian Exclusion League (AEL). The AEL wanted to spread anti-Asian feelings, and push for limited Asian immigration.

In September 1907, the AEL organized a parade of several thousand protestors. They gathered at Vancouver City Hall carrying banners that said, "Keep Canada White" and "Stop the Yellow Peril." A figure of the BC Lieutenant-Governor Robert Dunsmuir was burned during the rally. He employed Asian immigrants in his coal mines on Vancouver Island. Dunsmuir did not support those who wanted to limit Asian immigration.



As part of the rally, people gave speeches that criticized the growing Asian population. At 9:00 p.m. the leaders of the rally encouraged the crowd to move towards Chinatown and Japantown. This led to hours of rioting. Windows were

broken and Asian businesses were looted. The Chinese did not fight back. The Japanese residents built **barricades**. Armed with guns, knives, and bricks, the Japanese residents managed to hold off the rioters. The rioting petered out in the early hours of September 8. Many people were injured and there was a lot of property damage. On September 9, rioters tried to attack Japantown again, but they were dispersed by the police.



In 1908, the federal government awarded compensation to riot victims. Japanese victims received \$9,000 as a community and Chinese victims received \$26,000 as a community. It was decided that Asian immigration to Canada was the primary cause of the riot.

On July 1, 1923, the federal government passed legislation suspending Chinese immigration indefinitely. Only after World War II, in 1947, were Chinese once again allowed to immigrate to Canada.

### Vocabulary

**barricades:**  
barriers built to block or defend oneself

**immigrants:**  
people who come to live permanently in a foreign country