

Message from Jean Augustine

Jean Augustine

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**A MESSAGE FROM DR. JEAN AUGUSTINE, CHAIR,
ONTARIO BICENTENARY COMMEMORATIVE COMMITTEE
ON THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE**



Mike Colle, Ontario Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and Dr. Jean Augustine, Chair of the Ontario Bicentenary Commemorative Committee on the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

On March 21, I was pleased that the Government of Ontario passed a resolution to commemorate the 200th anniversary of British Parliament's passage of An Act for the Abolition of Slave Trade, 1807.

This resolution was put forward by Ontario Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Mike Colle and it was unanimously supported by each party in the Legislative Assembly.

The decision to recognize this historic occasion honours the memory of enslaved Africans and those who fought for the abolition of slavery in Ontario and throughout the world. Our committee's hope is that the bicentenary will give all of us—as Ontarians—an opportunity to better understand the roots and legacy of slavery, and to honour the unsung heroes who fought for abolition.

**MOTION COMMEMORATING 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE ACT, 1807
MARCH 21, 2007**

Be it resolved that:

The Legislative Assembly recognizes that the 25th of March 2007, marks the 200th anniversary of the passage by the British Parliament of An Act for the Abolition of Slave Trade, 1807;

To acknowledge that this trade in human beings was an affront to the core values of our society, to our sense of justice and our reverence for human dignity and freedom;

To acknowledge that the slave trade and slavery is at the historical root of and has contributed to the social and economic inequality that continues to affect people of African descent;

To acknowledge that this legislation contributed greatly to the passage in 1834 of the first act to abolish slavery throughout the British Empire;

To honour the memory of those who suffered and died as a result of slavery or resisting enslavement and those who fought for its abolition in Ontario and around the world;

To recall with sorrow that slavery was practised on Ontario's soil;

To recall that in 1793 – a mere two years after its establishment – Upper Canada, as Ontario was then

known, passed An Act to prevent the further introduction of Slaves, and to limit the Term of Contracts for Servitude within this Province, and that this act was the first to limit slavery in the British Empire, although it did not end enslavement;

To recall also with pride the role that Ontarians later played in the Underground Railroad, which was in operation roughly from 1815-1865, and the courage of those who helped enslaved Africans escape from the United States to freedom in our province; and

To acknowledge that this day has been designated by the United Nations as the International Day for the commemoration of this event,

The Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, on behalf of the people of Ontario,

Joins Parliaments and governments around the world in marking this event of global historic significance;

Condemns racism and reaffirms our belief in diversity, inclusion and equality; and

Condemns bonded labour and any and all forms of slavery and human trafficking that continue to exist under various guises around the world today.