Minutes – Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development, Heritage and Downtown Development – May 27, 2019

REPORTS

Item No. 8 Additions to the Assiniboia Street Name Reserve List – "Liaquat Ali Khan" and "Liaquat Ra'ana" (Waverley West Ward)

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development, Heritage and Downtown Development concurred in the recommendation of the Assiniboia Community Committee and directed the Winnipeg Public Service to review and report back to the Assiniboia Community Committee on the additions of "Liaquat Ali Khan" and "Liaquat Ra'ana" to the Assiniboia Street Name Reserve List.

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Rollins,

That the recommendation of the Assiniboia Community Committee be concurred in.

Carried

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On May 7, 2019, the Assiniboia Community Committee recommended to the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development, Heritage and Downtown Development that the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to review and report back to the Assiniboia Community Committee on the additions of “Liaquat Ali Khan” and “Liaquat Ra’ana” to the Assiniboia Street Name Reserve List.

Councillor Janice Lukes
City Councillor and Deputy Speaker
City Hall - Council Building
510 Main Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 1B9

March 30, 2019

Dear Councillor Janice Lukes,

My name is Bashir Khan and I am the Secretary of the Pakistan-Canada Cultural Equation of Manitoba. I am writing to express gratitude on behalf of our community organisation to you for having attended a commemoration of Pakistan's 63rd Republic Day on Saturday March 23, 2019.

The executive of our organisation has passed a unanimous motion to request you to please kindly help our organisation and the Pakistani-Canadian community in Winnipeg to name a street in honour of the first prime minister of Pakistan, Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan.

There are two proposed names for a street that have been equally favoured by the executive, they are: Liaquat Ali Khan or Liaquat Ra'ana (Street, Avenue, Road, Crescent, Bay, etc.). I should mention that Ra'ana was the first name of the prime minister's wife. She was the first lady of Pakistan and had done tremendous amount of humanitarian work with refugees who had suffered so much during the horrible partition of British India in 1947.

Other Pakistani community groups in Winnipeg, such as the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, have wholeheartedly supported this proposal. If this request is approved, then I have been instructed to inform you, that there will be an event held with great fanfare to mark the naming of this street with about 350 to 500 Pakistani-Canadians in attendance. The response from the Pakistan High Commission in Ottawa is a favourable one as they would endeavour to send a senior diplomatic representative (possibly the newly appointed High Commissioner himself) to the event celebrating the naming of this street.

Please kindly find attached with this letter a 4-page document that has been drafted by our organisation that presents a rationale as to why the first prime minister of Pakistan ought to be honoured through the naming of a Winnipeg Street. Thank you. Looking forward to your response!

Yours Sincerely,

Bashir A. Khan

The British Indian Empire of the 1940's had 400 Million peoples of various communities. It was not one single homogenous community. The people of India were as diverse as the many nations of Europe. Each group of people had a different language, inhabited a different region, and had different culture. Even India was divided into two Indias: Indian India and British India. Indian India consisted of 526 Princely Kingdoms that were ruled by a king known as Raja, Maharaja, Nizam and Nawab. They were separate independent kingdoms in India. Indian India consisted of 11 British administered provinces.

Of the 400 Million people of India, there were 100 Million Muslim People. As the British Discussed the possibility of giving India her independence the question arose as to what will be the status and the rightful place of minority communities in an independant India. The Indian National Congress, also known as the Congress Party, wanted to give one person, one vote in a First Past the Post system after the Westminster styl e of democracy in an all India context. This would have meant that there would have been 3 Hindu votes to the 1 Muslim vote. This would have created the situation of making Hindus into a perpetual majority and the Muslims into a perpetual minority for all times. Since Muslims had lived all over India, they would never have sufficient votes in a constituency to elect a Member of Parliament that would represent their interests as to their numbers which at that time formed 33 and a half percent in an All India Context.

To solve this great dilemma, which was a serious constitutional problem, arose Quaid-e-Azam

Mahomed Ali Jinnah, a Member of the Congress Party and "his right hand" Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan.

Both these visionary men were the leaders of the All India Muslim League and all they wanted from the British Government was to grant Muslim minority constitutional rights in India before Transferring Power into Indian hands. The solution that Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan had proposed was that India should become a Federal State like Canada, United States or Australia where there should be powerful local government that would look after local affairs. Like Manitoba, there is the provincial government that looks after local Manitoba specific matters. And that a Federal Government from its capital at Delhi in India should not be able to easily interfere in local provincial matters in the Indian provinces. This would protect Muslims where they formed a numerical majority by having their own local government without interference from the Central Government.

It’s like the current Constitution that we have in Canada, which prevents Ottawa from interfering in local Manitoba affairs. Mr. Jinnah wanted an India to be much like Canada, which back in the 1940's had, and the Canada of today still has, a division of powers between a federal government and the provincial government. This proposal to safeguard Muslim rights was vehemently opposed by the Congress Party who wanted a strong Central government with an extremely weak provincial / local state government apparatus. The central government in India today can dismiss a local state government at any time if they wish. Even the Supreme Court of India has said that India is not a Federal State, like the way Canada, Australia or the United States are.

Because the Congress Party did not agree to give local provincial or state rights to the different provinces I states of India where Muslims formed a majority, the division of British India into Hindu India and Muslim India occurred. This division of British India was done by the British Government with the consent and cooperation of the Congress Party and the Muslim League.

Mr. Jinnah in his first speech to the first Pakistani Parliament, then known as the Constituent

Assembly, on August 11, 1947 said:

> "I know there are people who do not quite agree with the division of lndia and the partition of the Punjab and Bengal. Much has been said against it, but now that it has been accepted, it is the duty of everyone of us to loyally abide by it and honourably act according to the agreement which is now final and binding on all. But you must remember, as I have said, that this mighty revolution that has taken place is unprecedented. One can quite understand the feeling that exists between the two communities wherever one community is in majority and the other is in minority. But the question is, whether it was possible or practicable to act otherwise than what has been done, A division had to take place. On both sides, in Hindustan and Pakistan, there are sections of people who may not agree with it, who may not like it, but in my judgement there was no other solution and I am sure future history will record is verdict in favour of it. **And what is more, it will be proved by actual experience as we go on that was the only solution of India's constitutional problem. Any idea of a united India could never have worked and in my judgement it would have led us to terrific disaster.** Maybe that view is correct; maybe it is not; that remains to be seen. All the same, in this division it was impossible to avoid the question of minorities being in one Dominion or the other. Now that was unavoidable. There is no other solution."

Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan wanted a united India with the Canadian constitutional and political framework- which is that of a Federal State. And a Federal State is by definition full of diversity, and is multicultural because the different constituent units of a Federal State are very different from each other: ethnically, culturally, linguistically, geographically and could even have different religions.

Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan wanted a united India where the many diversities of India could be properly appreciated and respected in the framework of a united India as a Federal State, in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi religious and a multi lingual India.

The lack of a constitutional agreement, or rather a deadlock, between the Indian National Congress and the All India Muslim League as to whether India would be a true Federal State is howand why Pakistan came about and are the reasons for its creation.