



Council Member Motion
for the Governance and Priorities Committee meeting of March 26, 2015

Date: March 12, 2015 **From:** Councillors Isitt and Thornton-Joe
Subject: Commemorating Lebanese Immigration to Canada

BACKGROUND

The World Lebanese Cultural Union - BC Council has requested the co-operation of the City of Victoria in identifying potential sites within the City for the installation of the statue "The Lebanese Emigrant," commemorating immigration from Lebanon to Canada and the contribution of Lebanese-Canadians to Canadian society.

The Lebanese-Canadian community has offered to cover all costs relating to the installation of the statue.

MOTION

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council directs staff to work with the World Lebanese Cultural Union - BC Council and the local Lebanese-Canadian community to identify and report back to Council on potential sites within the City of Victoria for the installation of the statue "The Lebanese Emigrant," including possible sites in the City right-of-way, plazas, greenspace or parks in proximity to Downtown Victoria or Victoria Harbour that would be suitable for this statue.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben Isitt".

Councillor Ben Isitt

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charlayne Thornton-Joe".

Councillor Charlayne Thornton-Joe

Attachments.

Letter from World Lebanese Cultural Union - BC Council



MAYOR'S OFFICE
FEB 26 2015
VICTORIA, B.C.

World Lebanese Cultural Union (WLCU)
British Columbia Council

23 February 2015

Dear Mayor Lisa Helps and Victoria City Council Members:

We would like to submit for your consideration a project to erect a statue in the City of Victoria to commemorate the arrival of the first Lebanese emigrant to British Columbia 126 years ago.

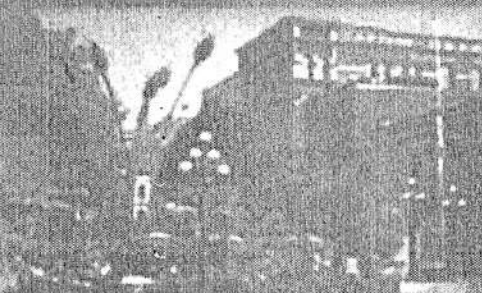
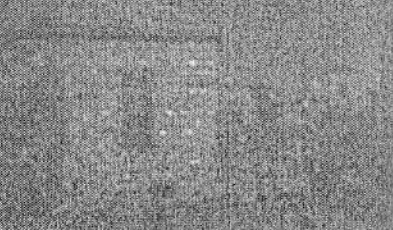
We have attached a detailed project plan and express our willingness to present, as a gift to the city of Victoria, a statue entitled "The Lebanese Emigrant." This statue is a token of our appreciation to the province that welcomed our ancestors and continues to welcome emigrants from Lebanon. The WLCU - BC Council commits to cover all costs related to this project.

Kindly inform us of the date the Council is scheduled to discuss this proposal that we may attend and provide all the necessary information. We are also ready to meet with the planning committee whenever this is useful. In the hope of a favourable outcome for this request, I am,

Yours sincerely,

John Badr
WLCU-BC Council President
Info@wlcu.org

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LIBRARY



THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LIBRARY - 125 years of contribution

From Lebanon to British Columbia

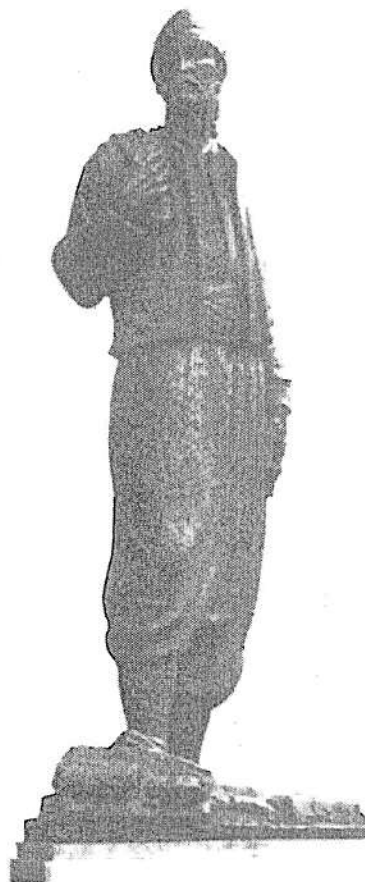
INTRODUCTION:

The BC Council of the World Lebanese Cultural Union is proud to submit to the Victoria City Council this proposal for a permanent site for "The Lebanese Emigrant" statue. Commemorating the 127th year anniversary of the arrival of the first Lebanese emigrants to British Columbia, this bronze statue concretizes the link between the peoples of Canada and the Lebanese who immigrated to their shores.

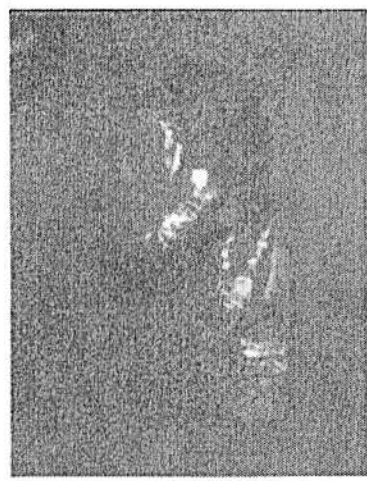
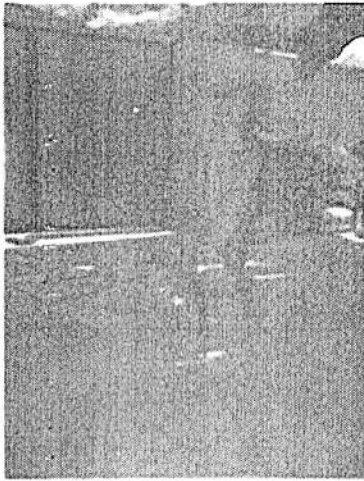
BACKGROUND:

The World Lebanese Cultural Union (Canadian Registered charitable organization # 82537 1149.RR) is part of a world-wide association, which serves as an umbrella for several groups active in British Columbia, including The Lebanese Canadian Society of BC, The Christian Canadian Lebanese Association - Victoria, and the BC Youth Chapter. Numerous members of these groups are descendants of the first Lebanese settlers who arrived in Montreal in 1882 to escape economic hardship and religious and political persecution under the Ottoman Empire. *The first Lebanese in the province were two brothers, Abraham and Farris Ray, who began their careers in Victoria as itinerant peddlers in 1888, their brothers Richard joined them in 1889.* By the end of the 1880s the first Lebanese families began to arrive in Vancouver, and establish their homes in the Lower Mainland. Among the Lebanese pioneers on the west coast, the names of Rahi (became Ray), Shumas, Saba, Naaoom, Mussallem, Haddad, Gillette, Brady and Kalley stand out. Some of them went to Vancouver Island to work in the forestry industry, and some settled in Victoria as peddlers.

To cement the ties that bind the Lebanese Diaspora to life in western Canada, the WLCU, encouraged by a verbal approval from Mayor Alan Lowe (1999-2008), had arranged for the shipment of the statue "The Lebanese Emigrant" for placement in Victoria. Designed and executed by Mr. Ramiz Barquet, a sculptor and Mexican national of Lebanese decent, this statue is one of few identical pieces standing prominently in various cities around the world: Mexico City, Beirut, Brisbane, Melbourne, Accra, and soon we hope, Victoria. "The Lebanese Emigrant" represents the world-wide spread of Lebanese culture as well as the love, honor and respect Lebanese emigrants feel for the nations that so generously received them.



MAKING OF THE STATUE:

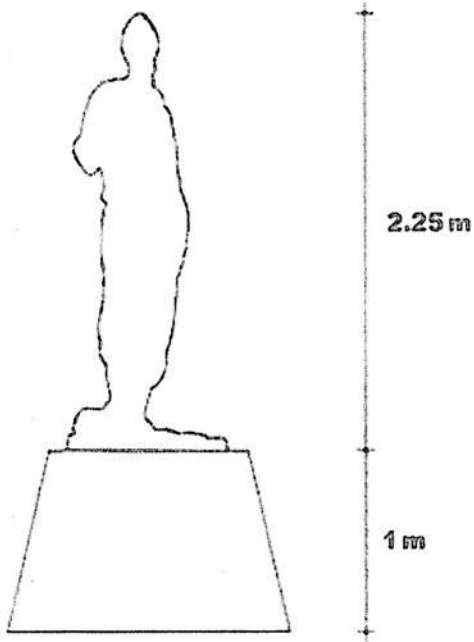


The statue was manufactured in Mexico and brought to Victoria by boat. It is currently standing in a private location at Douglas Street, at the corner of the Traveler's Inn Hotel. *The Lebanese Canadian community is ready to fund the cost of moving and mounting the statue to a new and permanent location.*

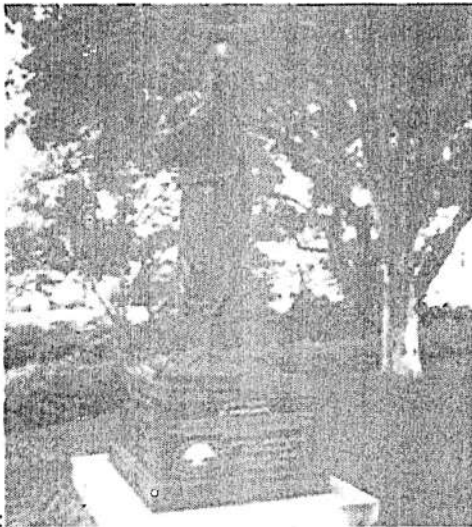
DONATION TO THE CITY:

The WLCU hopes the City of Victoria will accept our gift of "The Lebanese Emigrant" statue as a token of appreciation to the province that welcomed our ancestors for the last 127 years with open arms and provided them freedom, opportunity and a bright future.

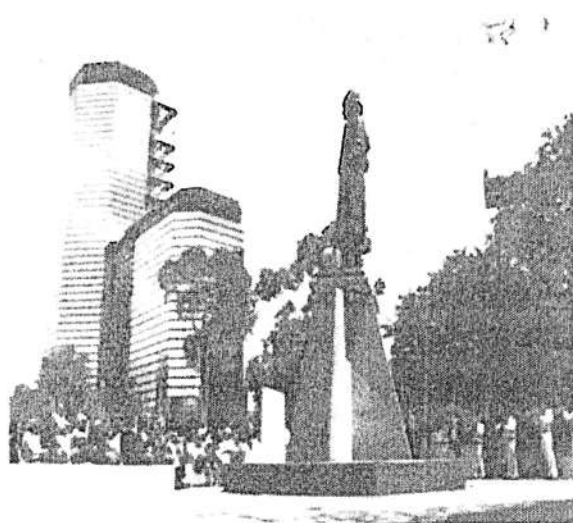
STATUE SPECIFICATIONS: "The Lebanese Emigrant" is made of high quality bronze, 2.25 metres high and weighs 600kg. The statue could sit atop a stone base with a 2 x 2 m footprint and measuring 1 m high.



THE ARTIST, Ramiz Barquet: A Mexican national of Lebanese decent, Ramiz is the creator of several monumental sculptures on permanent public display in Puerto Vallarta and worldwide



El-Emigrante Libanes (The Lebanese Emigrant) 2010
Brisbane, Queensland, AUSTRALIA



El-Emigrante Libanes (The Lebanese Emigrant) 1979
Mexico City, MEXICO

PROPOSED SITE:

We request a placement in the Downtown of Victoria. The waterfront area being a focal point for the Lebanese since their arrival to Victoria, might be the best area to erect "The Lebanese Emigrant." The next best option would be the space in the centre of a large roundabout; the business district with many streets and plazas features a suitable metropolitan setting. We look forward to working with you to find a suitable placement for this statue to commemorate the Lebanese emigrant experience in BC.

CONCLUSION:

The World Lebanese Cultural Union – BC council and the Culture & Heritage Affairs committee of the World Lebanese Cultural Union (NGO) would like to express its utmost gratitude for the support of the Victoria City Council and its officers in their involvement with this project, helping to provide a space to erect a statue that symbolises and commemorates 127 years of contribution by the Lebanese community to British Columbia.

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