

INDICAN FRIENDSHIP CLUB

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INDICAN FRIENDSHIP CLUB

Connecting and creating friendship
between India & Canada



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Hello Members,

I am sure you are now in a habit of reading the Newsletter, I try my best to keep it as informative as possible because information is the key to success. In the concluding part of the last Newsletter I mentioned as to why Indians have a propensity towards Canada. If we go by Canada Statistics, then Indian-Canadians are one of the fastest growing communities in Canada, making up the second largest non-European group after Chinese Canadians.

Canada contains the world's eighth largest Indian diaspora. The highest concentrations of Indian Canadians are found in the provinces of Ontario and British Columbia, followed by growing communities in Alberta and Quebec as well, with the majority of them being foreign-born. According to a Forbes report, the number of Indians who became permanent residents in Canada increased from 39,340 in 2016 to 80,685 in 2019, an increase of more than 105 percent. With such high numbers, it is no surprise that the community also has good representation politically. In 2019's federal elections, 23 Indo-Canadians were elected as MPs against the 21 elected in 2015, of which 18 had a Punjab connect.

It all started since 1904, when a few Indian Immigrants arrived in Vancouver and carved out a space for themselves. In comparison to that time today the scenario is different a very high number of Indians migrating to Canada for better higher education, job prospects and also for an overall better life. A low unemployment rate of 5.67 percent even during the COVID-19 pandemic makes Canada an attractive place for immigrants.

Moreover, university tuition fees are cheaper in Canada than the US by a whopping 27 percent. Canada is also ranked as one of the safest places globally. The Global Peace Index in 2021 stated that Canada was the sixth safest country in the world. Canada received particularly good scores for internal conflicts, levels of crime, and political stability.

Keep reading, in my next Newsletter, I shall give more details as to why Indians are keen to go to Canada. Thanks members.

President
Indican Friendship Club



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Canada in Mid 20th century

With the independence of India being an emanant concern, the federal continuous-journey regulation was removed in 1947. Most of British Columbia's anti-South Asian legislation would also be withdrawn in 1947, and the Indian Canadian community would be returned the right to vote. At that time, thousands of people were moved across the nascent borders of the newly-established India and Pakistan. Research in Canada suggests that many of the early Goans to emigrate to Canada were those who were born and lived in Karachi, Mumbai, (formerly Bombay), and Kolkata (formerly Calcutta). Another group of people that arrived in Canada during this period were the Anglo-Indians, people of mixed European and Indian ancestry.



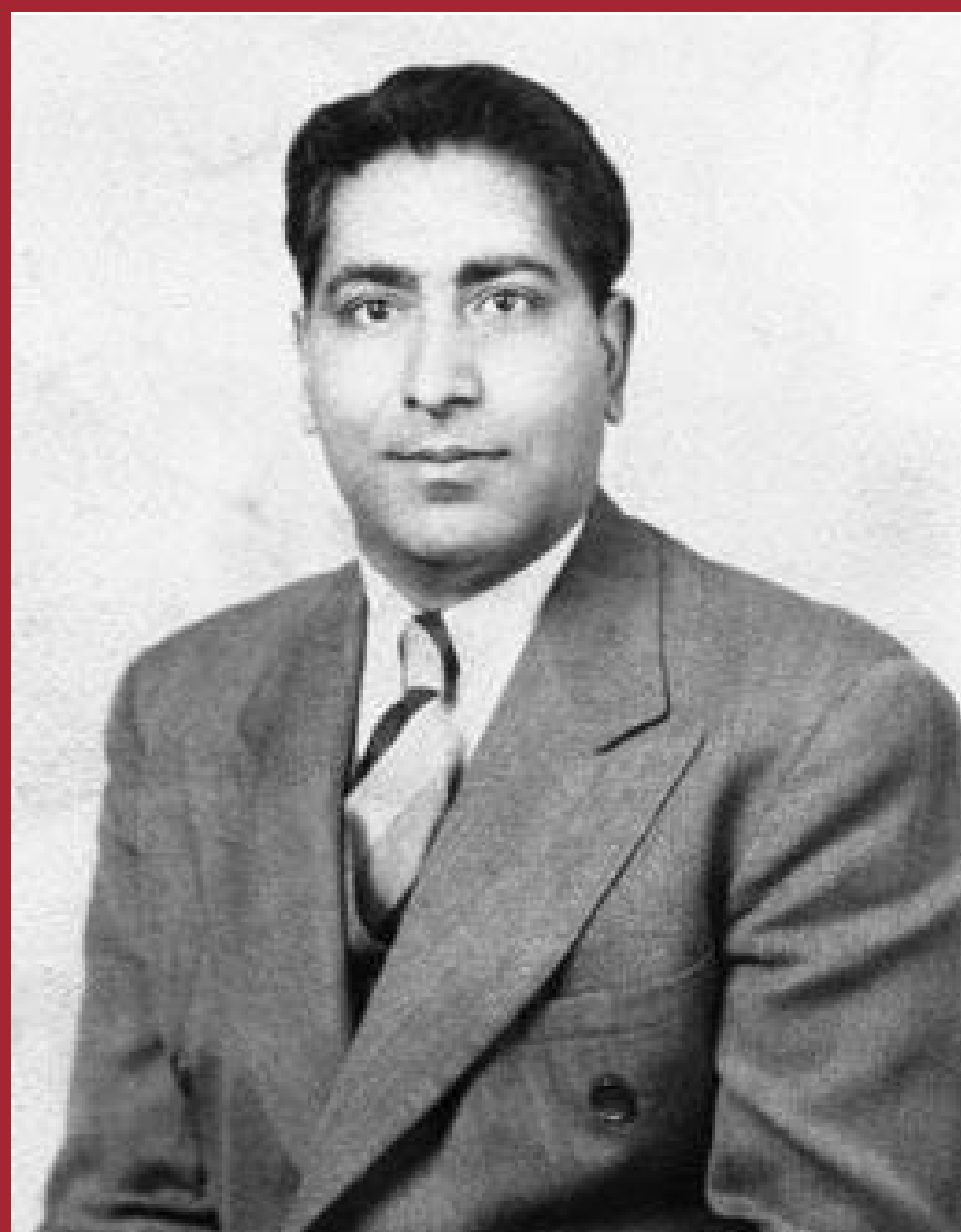
Canadian World War I soldiers
in England, en route to France.



South Asians in
Canada (1951)

In 1951, in place of the continuous-journey provision, the Canadian government would enact an annual immigration quota for India (150 per year), Pakistan (100), and Ceylon (50). At that time, there were only 2,148 South Asians in Canada.

A significant event in Indo-Canadian history occurred in 1950 when 25 years after settling in Canada and nine years after moving to British Columbia from Toronto, Naranjan "Giani" Singh Grewall became the first individual of Indian ancestry in Canada and North America to be elected to public office after successfully running for a position on the board of commissioners in Mission, a city in BC (British Columbia) against six other candidates. Grewall was re-elected to the board of commissioners in 1952 and by 1954, was elected to become mayor of Mission.



Naranjan Singh Grewall
Public Officer (1950)

This is what Niranjan Singh addressed to Public of Mission City. *"Thank you all citizens of Mission City [...] It is a credit to this community to elect the first East Indian to public office in the history of our great dominion. It shows your broad-mindedness, tolerance and consideration".*

A millwright and union official, and known as a sportsman and humanitarian philanthropist as well as a lumberman, Grewall eventually established himself as one of the largest employers and most influential business leaders in the northern Fraser Valley, owned six saw mills and was active in community affairs serving on the boards or as chairman of a variety of organizations, and was instrumental in helping create Mission's municipal tree farm.



Fraser River Heritage Park
Part of Mission's Tree Farm

With strong pro-labour beliefs despite his role as a mill-owner, after a scandal embroiled the provincial Ministry of Forestry under the-then Social Credit Party government, he referred to holders of forest management licenses across British Columbia as Timber Maharajahs, and cautioned that within a decade, three or four giant corporations would predominantly control the entire industry in the province, echoing similarities to the archaic zamindar system in South Asia. He later ran unsuccessfully for the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (the precursor of today's New Democratic Party) in the Dewdney riding in the provincial election of 1956.

While by the 1950s, Indo-Canadians had gained respect in business in British Columbia primarily for their work in owning sawmills and aiding the development of the provincial forestry industry, racism still existed especially in the upper echelons of society. As such, during the campaign period and in the aftermath of running for MLA in 1956, Grewall received personal threats, while the six mills he owned along with his house were all set ablaze by arsonists. One year later, on July 17, 1957 while on a business trip, he was suspiciously found dead in a Seattle motel, having been shot in the head. Grewall Street in Mission was named in his honour.



Fraser Valley Saw Mills
Mission City (1950)



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