



KHALSA DIWAN SOCIETY

SIKH TEMPLE

1866 WEST 2ND AVENUE

VANCOUVER, B. C.

June 7th 1943

Mr P. Maitland
Attorney General
of
British Col
Victoria B.C.

Dear Hon Sir:-

I have been directed by
my executive to ask you Sir if you
would kindly send to me the Act
which was placed on the Statutes
of B. Col around 1910 which disqualified
any of Asiatic blood from the franchise
If there is any charge for the
same kindly let me know and I will
send amount requested
In anticipation of an early reply
I have the honor to be
Yours truly
Manmohan Singh

Statutes
of the
Province of B. C.
1939

Chap 16

sect 2 page 42

sect 5⁸ page 44

"Hindu" means any native of
India not born of Anglo. Saxon
parents, and shall include any such
person whether a British subject or not.

OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

PROVINCE OF

BRITISH COLUMBIA

December 12th, 1942.

C O P Y

The Honourable Mr. M. S. Aney,
(Indian Overseas),
Member Viceroy's Executive Council,
NEW DELHI, India.

Dear Sir:

It is our wish to report to you the conditions prevailing in British Columbia with reference to the voting franchise and also with regard to obligations imposed on "East Indians" to undergo military service. An outline of the situation is set forth in a letter written to-day to the Sharomani Gurdawara Parbandik Committee, copy of which we enclose. We also enclose the Petition and a copy of the letter to Mr. H. E. Winch referred to in the said letter.

We make the same request of you as we do of the Sharomani Gurdawara Parbandik Committee, that is, to give these conditions publicity and as far as possible to work in co-operation with the Committee.

Yours very sincerely,

KHALSA DIWAN SOCIETY,

Per, _____
Secretary.

NSG:NS
Encls.

India Government Trade Commissioner
OFFICER OF THE PREMIER

PROVINCE OF

BRITISH COLUMBIA

330 Fifth Avenue,
New York, N. Y.

VICTORIA

C O P Y

1 9 4 3
Jan. 25

E. I. Bird, Esq.,
Biard and Bird,
420-422 Metropolitan Bldg.,
VANCOUVER, B. C.

Dear Sir:

I have for acknowledgment your letter of January 22 and may say in connection with your request for an appointment for a delegation of East Indians that it will be impossible for me to see them this week, inasmuch as I find it necessary to go to Revelstoke to attend the funeral of the late Mr. Harry Johnston, M.L.A.

Immediately upon my return I will be engaged with the duties attendant upon the opening of the Legislature. However, if you will get in touch with me the following week I will endeavour to arrange a time.

Yours faithfully,

"JOHN HART"

Premier.

Sgd. Sadhu Singh Dhilli,

3450 University Street,
Montreal, P.Q. Canada

C o p y

India Government Trade Commissioner

New York

630 Fifth Avenue,
New York, N. Y.

December 12th, 1942.

Registered Mail

Mr. H. S. Aney,
(Indian Overseas),
Member Viceroy's Executive Council,
New Delhi, India.

November 24, 1942

My dear Sadhu Singh,

I have now had a chance of reading through your pamphlet. Let me say at once that I think it is extremely good and I am particularly struck by your excellent exposition of the Sikh spirit and ideals. I wish very much that when this pamphlet is printed it could receive wide circulation, both in Canada and in the United States. People in these two countries are generally ill-informed about the Sikhs whom they look upon vaguely as the fighting men of India, little knowing what a wealth of spiritual ideals and beliefs form the whole background of our philosophy and our religion. I personally would like to send a copy each to my friends in both countries, so please let me know when it has been printed.

Once again my heartiest congratulations on the good work that you have done.

Yours very sincerely,

(signed) H. S. Malik.

Hardit Singh Malik

Sadhu Singh Dhami, Esq.,
International Labour Office,
3480 University Street,
Montreal, P.Q. Canada

ENCLOSURE
Encls.

The following letter to be forwarded to the following
Newspapers:

The Vancouver Daily Province

The Vancouver Sun.

Victoria Daily Times.

The Victoria Colonist.

Federationist, Vancouver.

Labour Statesman.

Congress News.

Columbian, New Westminster.

Trail News, Trail, B. C.

Canadian Press, Vancouver.

Dear Sirs:

We are instructed by the Khalsa Diwan Society,
which body represents all "East Indians" resident in
British Columbia to forward you the enclosed Petition.

"East Indians" of British Columbia are disqualified
from voting at any election. This is the only Province
in Canada where "East Indians" are deprived of the franchise.
Nevertheless, they are liable to be called for military
service. Thus they suffer the same obligations as other
British subjects, without being able to enjoy the like
privileges.

It is with the object of remedying this situation that
the Petition, a copy of which is enclosed, has been forwarded
to the proper Dominion Government and Provincial Authorities.
Concurrently with the forwarding of the Petition, our clients
are sending to the Minister of National Defence a communication
protesting against the imposition upon them of compulsory
military service.

Should the Petition be allowed and our clients be
granted the franchise they will no longer have any objection
to military service, but on the contrary, they will most
gladly do their part to further the war effort.

Our clients seek your assistance in making public the situation referred to above. They hope that the granting to them of the franchise will have a soothing effect upon the political unrest in India. Consequently, any favourable publicity you may choose to give to this matter will be appreciated.

The following letter to accompany Petition and to be addressed to:

Rt. Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King, Prime Minister

Hon. Charles Gavan Power, Minister of National Defence for Air.

Hon. Norman A. McLarty, Secretary of State.

Hon. James A. McKinnon, Minister of Trade and Commerce.

Hon. Angus L. Macdonald, Minister of National Defence for Naval Services.

Hon. Joseph T. Thorson, Minister of National War Services.

Dr. H. L. Keenleyside, Dept. of External Affairs.

Hon. Arthur Meighen.

Dr. Coldwell, M.P., Leader of C. C. F. Party.

Local M.L.A.S.

Dear Sir:

We are instructed by Khalsa Diwan Society, which body represents all "East Indians" resident in British Columbia, to forward you the enclosed Petition.

As you are aware the East Indians of British Columbia are disqualified from voting at any election. This is the only Province in Canada where "East Indians" are deprived of the franchise. Nevertheless, they are liable to be called for military service. Thus they suffer the same obligations as other British Subjects without being able to enjoy the like privileges.

It is with the object of remedying this situation that the Petition, a copy of which is enclosed, has been forwarded to the Government of the Province of British Columbia. Concurrently with the forwarding of the Petition, our clients are sending to the Minister of Defence a communication protesting against the imposition upon them of compulsory military service.

Should the Petition be allowed and our clients be granted the franchise they will no longer have any objection to military service, but on the contrary they will most gladly do their part to further the war effort.

(2)

Your assistance is not respectfully solicited by the East Indians of British Columbia, with the object of prevailing upon the British Columbia Government to allow them the franchise.

Yours respectfully,

DATED OCTOBER 1st, 1942.

PETITION OF KHALSA DINAN
SOCIETY FOR VOTING FRANCHISE.

BIRD AND BIRD,
Barristers, etc.,
VANCOUVER, B. C.

TO THE GOVERNMENT

OF THE PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA:

THE HUMBLE PETITION of the undersigned, Khalsa Diwan Society, a society duly incorporated under the "Societies Act" of the Province of British Columbia, and representing all persons residing in the Province of British Columbia coming within the definition of "Hindu" as defined by Section 2 of the "Provincial Elections Act" of the said Province, and hereinafter referred to as "East Indians",

SHOWNTH AS FOLLOWS:-

- 1 - That by reason of Section 5, Subsection (a) of the said Statute "East Indians" of the Province of British Columbia may not apply to have their names inserted in any list of voters, and are disqualified from voting at any election.
- 2 - That Section 14, Subsection (2) (1) of the "Dominion Elections Act, 1933", Chapter 46 of the Statutes of Canada disqualifies and renders incapable of being registered as an elector, any person who is disqualified by reason of race from voting at an election of a member of the Legislative Assembly of the Province in which he or she resides.
- 3 - That because of the provisions of the "Provincial Elections Act" enacted by the Government of the Province of British Columbia "East Indians" residing in British Columbia are prohibited from voting at any Dominion or Provincial election taking place in the said Province.

- 4 - That the Province of British Columbia is the only Province of the Dominion of Canada which disqualifies "East Indians" from voting at Provincial Elections.
- 5 - That your Petitioner has as its members all "East Indians" resident in the Province of British Columbia, being about one thousand two hundred in number.
- 6 - That at a meeting of your Petitioner, Khalsa Diwan Society held at the Sikh Temple in the City of Vancouver, Province of British Columbia, the 27th day of September, 1942, the following resolution was duly passed by a unanimous vote, namely:-

"THAT WE, THE "EAST INDIANS" OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, ARE LOYAL TO CANADA, AND, IF NECESSARY, ARE READY TO LAY DOWN OUR LIVES IN DEFENCE OF THIS COUNTRY AGAINST AGGRESSION.

THAT A PETITION OR MEMORIAL BE SENT TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA AND THE PREMIER OF BRITISH COLUMBIA AND OTHER PROPER AUTHORITIES IN OTTAWA AND VICTORIA REQUESTING THAT WE, THE "EAST INDIANS" OF BRITISH COLUMBIA BE GRANTED OUR LONG CHERISHED AND LEGITIMATE OVERDUE CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

THAT SOME OF OUR YOUNG MEN HAVE BEEN CONSCRIPTED OR CALLED FOR MILITARY SERVICE RECENTLY, AND IN VIEW OF THIS FACT THAT A PROTEST BE LODGED WITH THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE, OR OTHER PROPER AUTHORITY, OBJECTING TO THE CALLING OF OUR PEOPLE FOR COMPULSORY MILITARY SERVICE WITHOUT GIVING OUR PEOPLE THE RIGHTS OF CITIZENSHIP IN BRITISH COLUMBIA."

7 - That since 1908 "East Indians" of the Province of British Columbia have been seeking the franchise now enjoyed by other British Subjects or naturalized aliens (Germans, Italians, and others). Shortly after the "Great War" I the Rt. Hon. Mr. Sastri, then Indian Government Agent in South Africa representing the "East Indians" of British Columbia, urged upon the authorities at Ottawa, the granting of such franchise, but without success. About two years ago, Dr. D. P. Pandia, then a member of the Indian National Council of India, while in Canada made similar efforts to accomplish such purpose, but with the same result. That during the months of January and February, 1942, Mr. H.S.L. Polak, Barrister of London, England, and Secretary of the "Indians" Overseas Association personally interviewed Prime Minister W.L. Mackenzie King at Ottawa, and Dr. H. L. Keenlyside of the Department of External Affairs, Ottawa, requesting on behalf of the "East Indians" of British Columbia that the Government of Canada prevail upon the Government of British Columbia the granting of such franchise. The Prime Minister of Canada refused such request. During such period Mr. Polak personally interviewed the Honourable John Hart, Premier of the Province of British Columbia, with a view of obtaining such franchise from your Government. Such efforts were unsuccessful.

8 - That the said "East Indians" are loyal British Subjects, but they consider that in view of their efforts for over thirty years to secure for

themselves the rights referred to above, and in view of obligations imposed upon them with regard to military service, that their petition herein should be granted.

9 - That your petitioner hopes that the granting of this petition, if the same is allowed, will have in some measure, a soothing effect upon the present political unrest in India. A communication from the Prime Minister of Canada to the Viceroy of India, stating that such franchise had been granted, would have no little effect upon the forty million voters of India, many of whom reside in the very Punjab cities, towns and villages from which they themselves originate.

YOUR PETITIONER THEREFORE most humbly prays that your Government may be graciously pleased to grant to the "East Indians" resident in the Province of British Columbia the right to vote at all elections held in the said Province, and that your Government will enact an amendment to the said "Provincial Elections Act" with the object of removing the disqualifications of "East Indians" under the said Statute, thereby abolishing the racial restriction preventing "East Indians" from voting at all elections held in the said Province, including elections held under the said "Dominion Elections Act".

AND YOUR PETITIONER will ever pray, etc.

DATED at the City of Vancouver, Province of British Columbia, this first day of October, 1942.

KHALSA DIWAN SOCIETY,

Per, "NARANJAN SINGH"
President.

Per, "NAGINDAR SINGH GILL"
Secretary.

The following letter to accompany Petition and be addressed to:

The Hon. James L. Ralston, Minister of National Defence, Ottawa.

Dear Sir:

We are instructed by the Khalsa Diwan Society, which body represents all "East Indians" resident in British Columbia, to forward you a copy of a Resolution passed by the members of this Organization on the 27th ultimo.

The Resolution passed by a unanimous vote is as follows:

"That we, the "East Indians" of British Columbia, are loyal to Canada, and, if necessary, are ready to lay down our lives in defence of this country against aggression.

That a Petition or memorial be sent to the Prime Minister of Canada and the Premier of British Columbia and other proper authorities in Ottawa and Victoria requesting that we, the "East Indians" of British Columbia be granted our long cherished and legitimate overdue citizenship rights in British Columbia.

That some of our young men have been conscripted or called for Military Service recently, and in view of this fact that a protest be lodged with the Minister of Defence, or other proper authority, objecting to the calling or our people for compulsory Military Service without giving our people the rights of citizenship in British Columbia."

Our clients are making efforts to obtain the franchise through the proper Provincial and Federal Authorities. Until the franchise is obtained our clients respectfully protest against any Government action subjecting them to compulsory Military Service.

Yours Truly

Mr. R.L. Maitland, Attorney-General of this Province, has advised us that he regrets his inability to attend. He says, "I note that you ask me to speak in favour of certain contentious measures. I am not prepared to discuss these questions during wartime."

The organization of the East Indians in California, The Hindustan Gadar Party, has wired its greetings and wishes for success in our efforts for our common object.

Mr. Hart, the Premier of this Province, His Worship the Mayor of Vancouver, and Mr. Howard Forester have informed us that they are unable to attend owing to previous engagements.

Mr. Howard Green, Member of Parliament, writes that he has much interest in the subjects which are to be discussed here tonight and would be glad to hear representations on them from our Society at any time. He thinks, however, that it would be improper for him to take part in the meeting.

Finally, I would like to tell you of a letter from Mr. Q.P. Jack, President of the Chinese Benevolent Association here. He regrets his inability to attend owing to a previous engagement, but says that he subscribes wholeheartedly to the movement for a speedy settlement of the political entanglements in India, so that three hundred and eighty million East Indians may be fully enlisted in this global warfare against the Axis, and for unconditional attainment of citizenship rights of the East Indians in this Province.

In conclusion let me say on behalf of the Khalsa Diwan Society that we are very happy to have you with us tonight.

TO THE GOVERNMENT

OF THE PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA:

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