

ARRIVAL OF THE EAST INDIANS

(SIKHS) IN CANADA (B.C.)

(Panellist: MR. H. M. Engineer)

A. IMMIGRATION

(See Charts attached)

- 1904: First arrivals to Promised Land (Previous negligible)
- Encouraged by employers for cheap, sturdy hard-workers and by steamship companies looking for steerage income.
- 1907: Anti-oriental riots (cheap labour... racial prejudice... non-Christians)
- Asiatic Exclusion League (Canada's destiny in Anglo-Saxon race)
- Hounded.... Attempt to settle Sikhs in Honduras
- 1908: Royal Commission on Oriental Problem ("Native of India is not suited to this country")
- Order-in-Council requiring direct ship to Canada from immigrant's homeland and a minimum of \$200 on landing.
- Restrictions to prevent (1) Hardships in rigorous climate
(2) Racial friction
(3) Reduction in standard of living...
- Migration to U.S.A. and return to India by many
- 1912: Chief Justice rules the Order-in-Council to be ULTRA VIRES
- 1913: Pro-Asian voices of a few pleading for anti-discrimination out of
(1) Christian love
(2) British fairplay
(3) Empire solidarity
- 1914: "Komagatu Maru" episode
- Mewa Singh's trial & execution
- 1919: Relaxation following excellent contribution by Sikh troops during World War I.
- Order-in-Council permitting wives and children below 18 to join immigrant.
- 1922: Anglo-Japanese Alliance... better treatment for Japanese than British subjects from India
- 1927: Vancouver Chapter of the Klan demand ban on all Asiatic immigration.
- 1930's: Several illegal immigrants despite economic depression
- Deportation of "non-children" after 20 years of excellent record
- 1939: Supreme Court shows compassion to deportees by "deferring" deportation.
- 1946: Liberalism following World War II ... Atlantic Charter, U.N. Charter, Declaration of Human Rights and military contribution by Sikhs
- Deferred deportees conceded "landed immigrant" status
- 1947: India joins Commonwealth as an independent nation
- Heavy lobbying for a new deal for immigration from India
- 1951: Canada-India Agreement... 150 sponsored immigrants (brothers, sisters, nephews, uncles, etc.) allowed every year.
- 1956: Quota approved for an additional 150 non-nominated skilled and professional East Indians per year.... Non-Sikhs also start arriving.
- 1962: New regulations... Sponsored relatives now required to be
(a) Fit and proper person by reason of training, education and skill as likely to establish himself, as well as
(b) requirement that he have sufficient means or pre-arranged job so as to maintain himself.

-Regulations favour Europeans, Egyptians, Lebanese, S.Americans, etc. who are allowed to sponsor married children and children over 21, as well as stand surety for brother, sister and dependent family

1967: Equality at last! New point system introduced for all immigrants based on ...Age...Knowledge of English/French...Education...skills ...Canadian demand for those skills...available job....blood relationship, etc. Also a sponsored category permits sponsoring irrespective of points of wife, children, widowed parent or parents over 60 years of age.

GENERAL: Current difficulties facing emigrants in India with paucity of medical and visa facilities and negligible assistance with passage loans.

-Visitors jumping gun to get landed immigrant status

-Postwar immigration of various nationalities (See chart)

B. POLITICAL STRUGGLE

Pre-1942: Continual struggle for elementary political and property rights

1942: Sikhs object to compulsory military service since they have no rights of representation

-C.C.F. sympathetic

1943: Organized labour switches to "fair play for the Sikhs".

1946: Heavy lobbying by leading Sikhs and Dr. Pandia for franchise for immigrants from India

1947: Franchise granted

1950: Anti-Asiatic feelings at low ebb.

C. SOCIAL LIFE

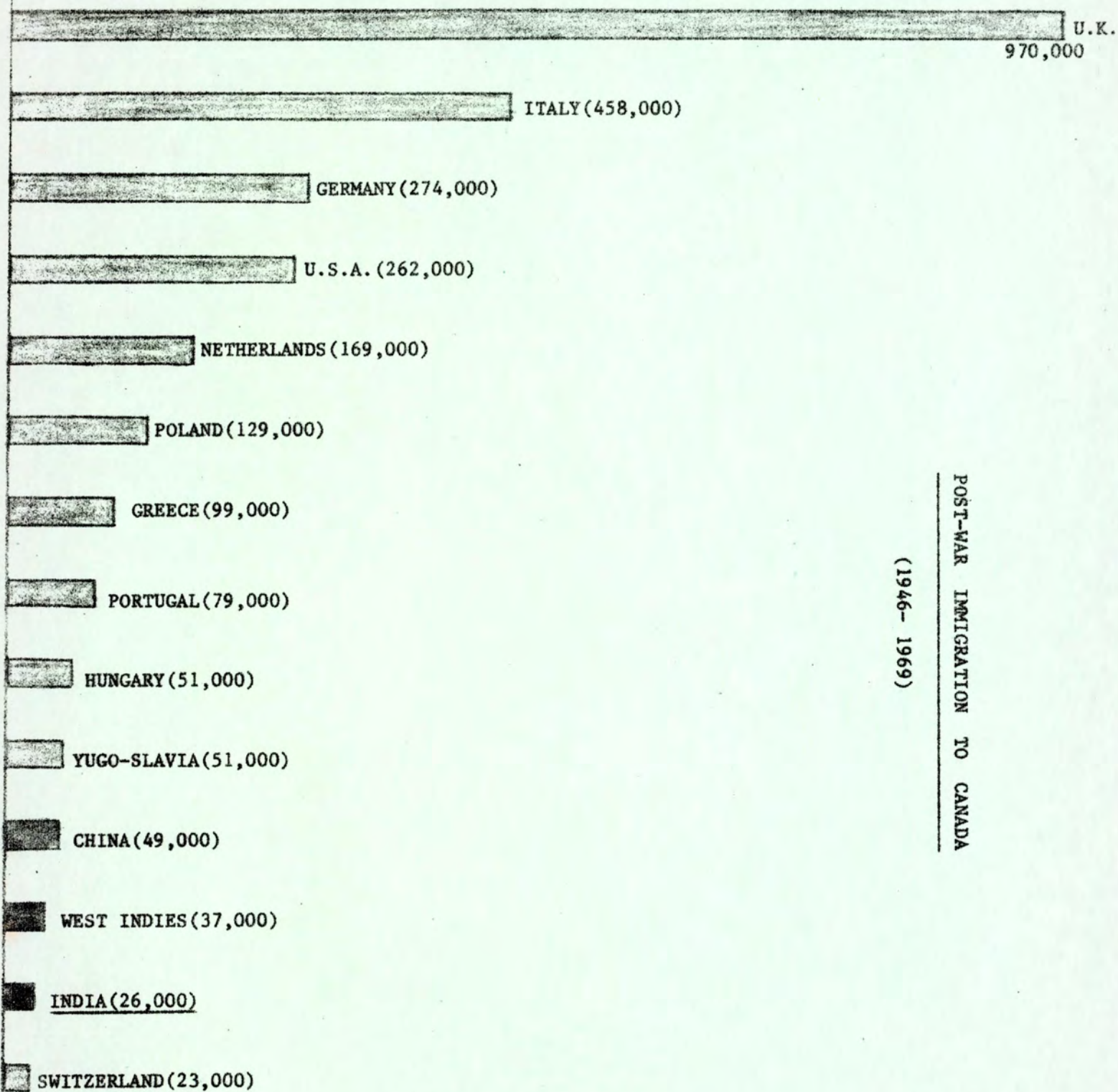
Early years very difficult with absence of family, sweated labour pay and hostile B.C. society.

In 1909, the Sikh Temple on West 2nd Avenue, Vancouver was erected and the Khalsa Diwan Society formed to look primarily after religious matters, although educational and philanthropic activities also played a part.

The Sikh is basically religious with a community feeling and strong loyalties especially towards his family. He is frugal by nature has simple tastes and shuns ostentation particularly in clothes. Except for the cinema during the earlier years, he entertained himself with social intercourse. Proud of his religious and martial traditions, he built up the reputation as the most law abiding immigrant, an honour he shared with the Japanese pre 1939.

D. ASSIMILATION

The orthodox Sikh is very difficult to assimilate to Canadian way of life. Since the end of the war especially, there has been a relaxation with the advent of the non-orthodox section, which first obtained a majority in the Khalsa Diwan Society way back in 1951. Other pressures are those in his job and the education of children. Second generation Sikhs tend to be more unorthodox and there has been growing numbers of Sikhs assimilating in themselves the best in the East and West. (This is a purely subjective viewpoint of the panellist.) Subsequent seminar sessions will go into this subject fully



POST-WAR IMMIGRATION TO CANADA
(1946-1969)

ROUGH ESTIMATE OF THE NUMBER OF
EAST INDIAN IMMIGRANTS SINCE 1900 A.D.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>APPROX. NUMBER</u>
1904	260
1906	5,000
1908	2,600
1911	2,350
1913	2,400
1921	1,000
1941	1,500
1946	1,600
1951	1,700
1955	2,100
1963	5,900
1966	12,400
1967	17,400
1968	21,300
1969	27,300

TOTAL NUMBER OF INDIAN IMMIGRANTS

