

November 21, 2015

## The Indo Canadian community stages an intervention in the Royal BC Museum

**VICTORIA, BC** – To many people who grew up on Vancouver Island, the scent of fresh-cut pine and the sight of stacked plywood evokes long held memories of the Indo Canadian community's logging and forestry roots in British Columbia.

But the historical accounts of logging and forestry in British Columbia have not fairly or equitably represented the history of Indo Canadian companies and individuals.

Today, the Indo Canadian community from the Lower Mainland, the Fraser Valley and Vancouver Island was invited to stage an "intervention" in the Logging Exhibit in the **Royal BC Museum's** Modern History gallery to reframe the historical record to include their poignant narrative.

"Through our collections and public exhibits we can share with the world the history of Indo Canadians in the province," **said Prof. Jack Lohman**, CEO of the Royal BC Museum. "The Indo Canadian community has had an outsized but unheralded impact on British Columbia's culture and economy, and we welcome this engagement with our galleries as a form of critical dialogue with those who have been left out or written out of our history."

The intervention, organized by the Royal BC Museum, the Centre for Indo Canadian Studies at the University of the Fraser Valley and the David Lam Centre at Simon Fraser University, included a dynamic telling of stories not shown or told in the exhibit and discussions about what the exhibit might look like – and what messages it might convey – in the future. The intervention is the first in a number of joint initiatives.

"We take encouragement from the Royal BC Museum partnership initiative as we undertake long term correction of past omissions," **said Satwinder Bains, Director of the Centre for Indo Canadian Studies.** "It is fitting that our first intervention is occurring in the Logging exhibit, as forestry industry involvement is the thread that ties our provincial migration journey."

The staging of this event in the provincial museum is significant for the Indo Canadian community, conspicuously and publicly marking what all hope is the beginning of a committed long-term relationship and a defining moment in the provincial correction of past wrongs.

The invitation of diverse cultural groups to help revise decades-old museum content is not a new concept for the Royal BC Museum, which successfully partnered with the First Peoples' Cultural Council to develop and create the award-winning feature exhibition *Our Living Languages: First Peoples' Voices in BC* in 2014.



The Royal BC Museum has supported other BC Government initiatives to correct the historical record, recently developing school outreach kits, website articles and other materials to commemorate the Chinese Historical Wrongs.

#### **About the Royal BC Museum**

**The Royal BC Museum explores the province's human history and natural history,** advances new knowledge and understanding of BC, and provides a dynamic forum for discussion and a place for reflection. The museum and archives celebrate culture and history, telling the stories of BC in ways that enlighten, stimulate and inspire. Looking to the future, the Royal BC Museum will be a refreshed, modern museum, extending its reach far beyond Victoria as a world-class cultural venue and repository of digital treasures.

- 30 -

#### **Media contact:**

Royal BC Museum Media Inquiries

250-387-5051

[news@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca](mailto:news@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca)

 [@RoyalBCMuseum](https://twitter.com/RoyalBCMuseum)