

Number 196

June, 2007

## Why Do They Grow Up So Fast?

Because we make them? A **Statistics Canada** study found "Canadian teens ranked first among their counterparts in nine **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development** countries in terms of average hours spent on unpaid and paid labour during the school week. Canadian teens averaged 7.1 hours of unpaid and paid labour per day in 2005 – a 50-hour work week, virtually the same as that of adult Canadians aged 20 to 64 doing the same activities." (**Toronto Star**, May 23, 2007)

## Canada, The Beacon

Ottawa likes to believe that some immigrant groups trailblaze exciting new trade routes while others come to Canada for the polish they can acquire at our institutions of higher learning. As usual, reality falls short of Ottawa's utopian pronouncements. On May 11th, the **Australian Crime Commission's** annual **Illicit Drug Data Report** noted: "Police fear a new form of incredibly potent cannabis is destined to hit Australia. Vietnamese criminal gangs in Canada have developed a sophisticated method of growing the plant indoors year-round. It greatly increases both the yield and potency of the cannabis and cuts growing time. The latest criminal intelligence suggests Australian-based Vietnamese drug dealers have gone to Canada to learn how to cultivate the highly addictive cannabis. They are expected to use the knowledge to grow and sell it in Australia." (**The Herald Sun**, May 12, 2007)

## More Aid Follies

In early June, that tag-team of Irish louts, **Bono** and **Bob Geldof**, charged Canada with stinginess on the foreign aid file. The routine may be as tired as their music, but there are some comic aspects: "Adam Taylor, national research director at the **Canadian Taxpayer's Federation**, said: 'When Canadians think of aid, they think their money's being used to help provide basic human needs for poor countries.' ... Yet, under the **International Fund for Ireland**, the **Department of Foreign Affairs** has contributed \$7.7-million for job creation and reconciliation projects in Northern and the Republic of Ireland -- both of which have a higher per-capita **GDP** than Canada. ... 'Aid to Ireland -- [the fourth-richest country in the world, with] a booming economy where taxes are much lower than in Canada -- is a preposterous use of so-called aid,' he said. ... **Hugo Chavez**, the Venezuelan leader, made great political capital from shipping cheap heating oil to poor Americans from Massachusetts to Alaska. Yet, his socialist Arcadia is not so awash in petro-dollars that it could afford to decline the \$3-million it got from Canada in humanitarian assistance in 2004-05. China is another recipient from this programme envelope, receiving \$57-million in the same year. ... 'Handing money to China -- a country with 10% annual economic growth, nuclear weapons and a space programme -- is as ridiculous [as aid to Ireland],' Mr. Taylor said. In the category of countries that shouldn't be receiving Canadian taxpayer's money because they're doing quite nicely, how about Brazil, the Czech Republic, Estonia or Poland? The latter received \$61-million in humanitarian assistance in 2004-05, although the government had the good sense to point out that its accession to the European Union should invalidate future funding. [Which hardly explains Ireland's open palm, or the hypocritical griping of its superannuated rockers.] These dribbles ... amount to more than \$2-billion in overseas aid every year." (**National Post**, June 19, 2007)  
**CIDA**, the **Canadian International Development Agency** sends

swag to 46 of 53 African countries, and the looting is breathtaking: "considering the news in June 2005 that the Nigerian government alone had stolen or misappropriated more than \$500 billion in the last 40 years according to the Nigerian government's **Economic and Financial Crimes Commission**, established in 2002. That figure ... is equivalent to six Marshall plans (the reconstruction plan that rebuilt post-war Europe)." (**Western Standard**, March 26, 2007)

## It's Not Easy Being Green

How many federal bureaucrats does it take to change every light bulb in the country? Federal bureaucrats don't change light bulbs, silly. They change laws. And you'll change those bulbs if you know what's good for you. Ottawa means to outlaw the old incandescent standby by 2012 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. But there are less Monty Pythonesque ways to save the planet: Immigration now accounts for two-thirds of Canada's population growth -- and they're not homesteading in Nunavut; they're settling by the hundreds of thousands in the suburbs of existing cities, adding to urban sprawl. "A **Statistics Canada** report released in 2005 noted that between 1971 and 2001, more than 7,400 square kilometres of land traditionally reserved for farming had been gobbled up by the country's expanding cities. The problem is not limited to Montreal and Toronto, Canada's two biggest cities. [The Toronto and Vancouver regions have notoriously subdivided, paved and Burger Kinged over what was once the most fertile farmland in the country.] Calgary has expanded rapidly southward, driven mostly by its booming oil industry, sacrificing the farmland that once hugged the city's rim. ... In Quebec ... only about 2 per cent -- or about two million hectares -- of the province's territory can be used for farming. About 50,000 hectares of farmland has been rezoned since 1994." (**Globe and Mail**, June 4, 2007)

## Refugee News: Putting Canadians Last

"Before the [2002] overhaul to the national refugee protection policy -- the first in three decades -- 'Canada was often criticized for taking the cream of the crop,' said **Chris Friesen**, director of settlement for the **Immigrant Services Society of B.C.** Canada tended to view refugees more in terms of what they could contribute to Canada, based on their ability to successfully integrate into the western lifestyle -- including finding employment -- within one to two years. Those with complicated physical, emotional or medical needs, such as **HIV/AIDS**, were not eligible for approval. But that thinking changed under the new policy framework, with the formal recognition that the main objective of the act is 'in the first instance about saving lives and offering protection to the displaced and persecuted.' Under the new policy, Canada currently sponsors more refugees per capita than any other country in the world, including the U.S., England and Australia. In B.C., the change in policy has directly resulted in a 'higher incidence' of refugees diagnosed with diabetes, hypertension, upper respiratory infections, heart disease, mental health conditions, including depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, and **HIV** infection, according to the **Immigrant Services Society**. ... Government-assisted refugees to the U.S. receive only three months financial assistance, while Canada provides up to 12 months. A quarter of refugees in B.C. end up on provincial welfare after one year resettlement." (**Vancouver Sun**, June 20, 2007)

## Impudent Little Scam

And our guardians of law and order yawn in the face of the victimized Canadian: **PEI** fisherman "Steve Stewart of Stewart Mussel Farms



**Inc.** said he endured a six month process of paper work and spent about \$20,000 in air fare to bring 11 Sri Lankans to work on his mussel boats. He also spent a lot of money renovating a house on his farm to provide them a place to live and was paying them \$10 an hour for a 50-hour work week. Mr. Stewart said the Sri Lankans each signed a contract that prohibited them working for anyone but him. About three weeks ago, all 11 workers left without notice. Mr. Stewart tracked them to Montreal, learning that they had hired two vans to drive them to Quebec. He contacted the **RCMP** as well as Citizenship and Immigration but was told the Sri Lankans were not breaking any laws and no effort would be made to have them return to **PEI**. ... **Malpeque MP Wayne Easter** said he is sending a detailed letter to **Prime Minister Stephen Harper** as well as to all relevant ministers to highlight the need to deal with similar situations. 'Clearly our immigration and security policy as a country has to be cleared up,' he said. 'If people are in violation of their work contract, they have to be shipped back home.' Mr. Stewart said this is the first time he has ever brought in workers and he was blindsided by their departure. He said he remains dumbfounded that they can roam the country as long as they don't work [and] he's left wondering if they had something else in mind when they came to Canada, like seeking refugee status." (**Canadian Press**, June 21, 2007) Let's do the Canadian thing and wait until they're infirm 85-year-olds, then deport them for lying to gain entry. Could the footloose 11 be Tamil Tiger terrorists? Has anyone checked? Does anyone care?

### **The sGhost Of sGro**

Two and a half years after Canadians were assured that the stripper visa programme was over, Ottawa "has introduced proposed amendments to the **Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA)** that will allow immigration officers to deny work permits to those entering the country to work as exotic dancers. **Immigration Minister Diane Finley** stated that it was an attempt to curb the prospect that migrant strippers may be 'abused, exploited or possibly become victims of human trafficking.' The amendments would give authority for Finley to instruct immigration officers to deny work permits to those who they believe will take up employment as strippers. [In other words, opening up promising new opportunities to petition the minister for special dispensation -- the very practice that tripped 'Strippergate' in the first place. Still, some activities just naturally shrink from the light of day.] Since 2004, permits issued per year for exotic dancers have dropped by approximately 80%. ... Currently, immigration officers have no authority to deny entry to anyone who meets the requirements of entry into Canada." (**WorkPermit.com**, May 17, 2007) What the hey. It's only our country after all.

### **Honk If You Love Unaccompanied, Underage, Pregnant Gypsies**

"The Roma children, one as young as ten, have apparently paid someone in Romania to send them to Slough [on London outskirts]. The Borough Council does not know why it has been singled out but has been forced to set up a special team and spend £150,000 helping the children. It has called for more government help to offset the strain on other services. The authority has revealed that since 1 January, when Romania joined the European Union, 88 Romanian Roma children have arrived asking for help. The children usually arrive in groups of three, but six have had babies of their own and seven have been pregnant. The local authority has had to set up an emergency Roma assessment team. It is currently supporting 53 children while others have been sent to live with family members who have been located in other parts of the **UK**. The Council say more money is needed from the Government to help them with migrants. Otherwise, other services could be cut." (**BBC**, May 12, 2007) "Lone minors of any nationality are entitled to a bed, a £45 (\$89) weekly

food allowance, a one-off £100 clothing grant, health care and, if they are under 16, free schooling. Perversely, being accompanied by an adult would immediately deprive them of these benefits." (**The Economist**, May 17, 2007) In fact, 400 "Roma" have landed in Slough this year: "A gang of about half-a-dozen Roma woman, some with toddlers in pushchairs, patrolled Slough High Street begging change from Saturday afternoon shoppers. A man approached a **Mail on Sunday** reporter, waving a card with a message written in pidgin English and asking for cash to support his three children. [As for the teen and child 'refugees,'] 'most have only a rudimentary grasp of English, meaning the council has had to employ two Roma translators. **David Munkley**, the council's commissioner for education, said: 'For those we are currently supporting, it will cost the council around £500,000 over the full year' [or over a million Canadian dollars to support 53 kids!] The arrival of the Roma children adds to an existing population crisis in Slough. Recently more than 1,000 homes across the borough were found to contain more than one family -- usually from Eastern Europe or Somalia -- and some houses had as many as 30 people living in them. The health service is under extreme pressure and many GPs have closed their surgeries to new patients, while there are 82 different languages spoken in the borough's schools." (**Mail on Sunday**, May 12, 2007) And speaking of schools, one profile of a 17-year-old pregnant "Roma" arrival notes: "Bianca cannot read and write has big hopes of her son or daughter of having the chance to get an education. She said ... 'Life is very good in Slough. I feel very welcomed here and I think my child will be welcomed ... I don't want it to live back in Romania.'" (**Slough & Windsor Observer**, May 18, 2007)

### **"World's Best & Brightest" Cost Millions**

Last year, BC admitted 42,000 immigrants. **BC Premier Gordon Campbell** pledged \$43 million over two years to support the **Welcome BC** initiative ... part of \$71.5 million in additional federal funding for settlement programmes negotiated by the province under last fall's **Agreement for Canada-British Columbia Co-operation on Immigration**. ... **Welcome B.C.** unites immigration settlement and multiculturalism services under one umbrella, and promises to help newcomers find everything from important information about English-language courses to employment, health, education and recreation services. ... Overall, Campbell said, Victoria and Ottawa will invest \$217 million over the next two years to support immigrants to B.C." (**Victoria Times Colonist**, June 13, 2007) It looks as if the world takes the best, and we get the rest.

### **Brave New World**

Once the poster boy for urban blight, New York compares more than favourably against the litter-ridden grime and decrepitude that is Toronto the Good today. Of course, "only a little more than a quarter of Toronto's spending [annual budget \$8-billion] goes to core services, such as police, fire, roads, garbage, transit and parks and recreation. The other 75% goes to non-essential services and projects. Yet despite this imbalance between essential and non-essential line items, **Mayor David Miller** has managed to raise spending nearly 30% in his first four years in office." (**National Post**, June 19, 2007) Across Canada there is a sense (upbeat police reports notwithstanding) that crime is making steady inroads. And across Canada, police respond to fewer calls, write fewer reports and refuse to "sweat the small stuff." But "broken windows" policing takes police: "Officers here are stretched thin: Calgary has one officer for every 645 residents; in Toronto the ratio is 1:481 and in New York, 1:217. ... In January, Vancouver launched a pilot project that enables Vancouver bylaw enforcement officers to issue and serve tickets, on the spot, to people accused of urinating, defecating, spitting and littering in public spaces. ... According to a **Project Civil City** progress report released in March, 217 tickets had been issued since



[January] Only 41 fines had been paid. ... By the mayor's own estimate, there are three private guards in Vancouver for every city police officer. Even social activists worry about the imbalance. Some predict that by 2010, the ratio will be 10:1." (National Post, June 9, 2007)

### Having Contributed Nothing, I Feel You Owe Me

On March 11, 2005, a crowd of 600 immigrants demonstrated outside the Toronto constituency office of then-immigration minister **Joe Volpe**. Protesting wait times for those anxious to bring elderly relatives to Canada, they waved placards proclaiming, "Time kills our parents." Darko and **Nadia Pantin** showed a masterful grasp of what was likely to push Ottawa's buttons. They keened: "We feel like the Jews in Europe during the Second World War." Each wore a Star of David within which was written "immigrant." Right on cue a month later, Volpe pledged he would triple elderly immigrant entries, eliminate language and knowledge of Canada citizenship requirements for incomers 55 and older, dedicate more than \$100-million to reduce wait times, expedite backlog processing of 110,000 elderly immigrant applications and ensure oldsters received citizenship within 12 months of application. Not surprisingly, **CIC (Facts and Figures 2006)** reported that while 3,187 "sons and daughters" were admitted as permanent residents last year, the number of "parents and grandparents" soared to 20,002 -- nearly doubling the 12,471 oldsters admitted in 2005. You're not alone in feeling that this is a curious way to provide for "our" old age. But there's more: "A Mississauga resident is spearheading a campaign to eliminate what he says is an unfair eligibility requirement for immigrant seniors wanting to collect old age pensions. 'This unfairness is a major problem immigrant seniors are facing, as most of them have no income at all, and hence are forced to share the marginal income their families generate,' said **Rafat Chaudhry**, a spokesman for the **Immigrant Seniors Advocacy Network**. [However nice to see we've abandoned the conceit that immigrants are net contributors, let alone workaholic over-achievers, why are marginally employed people allowed to bring in parents and grandparents at all?] Earlier this week, **ISAN** presented politicians with a petition with over 10,000 signatures. The petition is asking the federal government to: amend the **Old Age Security Act** to eliminate the 10-year residency requirement for collecting a pension; ... work with provincial governments to waive the enforcement of sponsorship obligations that force families to pay for a senior's upkeep in lieu of social benefits; ... provide government funding to support more ethno-specific, affordable housing for seniors who need or desire it. [And, talk about clout,] already, his group has convinced Ottawa to appoint a minister for seniors. 'The concept and goal of Canada's Old Age Security system is to provide a basic level of support for all Canadian seniors, irrespective of country of origin,' said **Kuldeep Singh Sahi**, a member of **ISAN**, who lives in Brampton. 'As such, it functions as a social welfare program for the aged -- to provide seniors 65 years and over who have little or no income.' [And what's the point of making outrageous demands if you can't propel your claim with 'racism!' booster rockets?] Since 1977, Canada has entered into reciprocal agreements with 50 countries that allow immigrants from participating nations to get old age pensions as soon as they reach age 65. The pact includes the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, 20 western European nations, Mexico, Chile, Philippines and nine Caribbean countries. Areas of the world without such agreements include most of Africa, Asia and eastern Europe. 'In effect, this creates two classes of senior immigrants: one coming from from certain countries who get pensions immediate[ly] and another group who are asked to wait 10 years before they are eligible for support,' said Sahi. [Does the word 'reciprocal' register at all? Why aren't they pressing the government of India? Oh. Right. And, resorting to 11-year-old figures, the group howls that] **Statistics Canada** data shows that in 1996 there were 3,527,846 seniors living in this country,

of whom 3,510,847 were receiving Old Age Security benefits. This left 16,998 individuals without any such benefits. Out of this group, more than half received other forms of social assistance instead." (Mississauga News, March 15, 2007) So elderly immigrants are not actually sleeping on hot air grates, but they are a nuisance to the loving offspring WHO ENTERED INTO A CONTRACT TO SPONSOR THEM. Let's revisit those 1996 figures for just a moment: According to that year's census, while immigrants accounted for 17.4% of the overall Canadian population [1] -- they represented a disproportionate 27.2% among the senior (65+) set [2]. Put another way, while senior citizens accounted for 10.1% of the native-born population, that number rose to 17.9% among immigrants. And there are indeed, "two classes of senior immigrants". "The average income of immigrants varies significantly by country of birth and is remarkably low for those from several southeast Asia countries (including China, Hong Kong, the Philippines and Vietnam [in other words, our leading source countries])". Consequently, the incidence of low income among elderly immigrants from these countries is extremely high, in some cases in excess of 40 percent. Immigrants with a relatively low average income have a heavier dependence on government transfer payments [2]." [1] **Statistics Canada, The Daily**, November 4, 1997, 1996 census: Citizenship and Immigration; [2] **Age Discrimination and the Employment Rights of Elderly Canadian Immigrants**, **MK Grant and Gretta Wong Grant**, April 1, 2002. And seniors tend to draw heavily on services least prepared for the coming demographic crunch. **Dr. Judy Verbeeton** wrote at the time of Volpe's vote-slurping 2005 concessions: "Welcoming 18,000 elderly relatives into the country is akin to reserving 18,000 spots in Canadian intensive care units and/or long term care facilities. It is a well-known fact that individuals incur approximately 90% of their lifetime health care costs in the last few years of their lives. Elderly Canadian citizens who have contributed to the tax base for their adult working lives and have supported the generations ahead of them should rightfully take their turn at using the very resources they have supported in the past. This, however, cannot be said of the newly arrived elderly immigrants." (National Post, April 20, 2005) But in the event, it wasn't "18,000 elderly relatives" was it? It was 20,002 demanding instant pensions to which they have contributed nothing. Truly, on the immigration file no good deed ever goes unpunished.

### CRIME WATCH

#### More Dangerous Than Darfur

"In the past two years, five Sudanese refugees have died in violent incidents in Edmonton [estimated Sudanese population - 3,000.] On July 17, 2005, **Charles Wula** escaped a police pursuit by running into the North Saskatchewan River near Rundle Park. He never made it out of the water. The night he died, the 38-year-old was fleeing from police because he had breached a court order to keep away from his wife's home after their divorce. **Nyibol Chuol**, 27, was stabbed to death on Sept. 6, 2006. Her body was found 10 days later in a ditch ... she was three months pregnant. Her husband, **John Both**, 41, has been charged with second-degree murder. **Thomas Tipo Orak**, 18, was shot to death in the **Red Light Lounge** nightclub in the early morning hours of Oct. 29, 2006. After a fight broke out on the dance floor, one man came into the club and started firing. Orak and two other men were killed. On May 15, 22-year-old **Deng Atem Bulgak** and 24-year-old **Jock Ring** were shot dead behind Bulgak's home. [At least a dozen shots were reported and two guns were recovered at the scene. Bulgak, from a family of eight, was a rapper with something styling itself **Jak Moode Squad** and his ambitions included finishing high school. Someday. Ring was on leave from his job in Brooks, presumably at **Tyson Meats' Lakeside Packers**] 'These things affect us greatly,' said **Sabrino Majok**, 35, a Sudanese refugee who has lived in Edmonton for six years. 'Most of us came from war-torn

Sudan and the purpose of coming here was security and peace of mind. It shocks us. It reminds people of the horrors back home.' Majok said many Sudanese were told that Canada was one of the safest places to live. 'Then, things like this happen. It leaves us without answers.'" (Edmonton Journal, May 17, 2007) No, it leaves us without answers. There is no politically permissible way to account for the unusually high incidence of brutally violent ends among transplants from brutally violent countries. Meanwhile, "three doors down from the scene of the shooting, neighbour **Scot Monninger** was packing boxes to move his family back to an empty trailer on his family's farm near Onoway. 'We should be out of here by the end of the week,' he said. 'This is the one that settles it.' Monninger's five-year-old son, Jacob, was in his bedroom upstairs when Monninger heard the first shot fired. His wife was in the bathroom. 'I just told my wife to hit the floor and get in the basement.' ... The 29-year-old construction worker said he's had it with the city. 'I'm not putting my family at this kind of risk,' he said, carrying cardboard boxes through the front door. 'There's going to be retaliation. I know how it works. I'm just smart enough to leave.' ... Another neighbour ... said she has often seen what she thinks are drug deals going on in the alley. Two cars pull up, one person gets out and walks to the other's window. Then both drive away. Her own van was stolen two weeks ago. Still, she's not as quick to move as her neighbour. 'I guess we'll see,' she said. 'We're hoping they move.'" (Edmonton Journal, May 17, 2007) Back to Sudan? Don't count on it.

### Khat Red Handed

Last March, a young couple met and fell for each other while staying at a London hostel. Desperate for the scratch to continue travelling, the pair answered an "advertisement in a local paper seeking couriers to bring 'tea' to Canada, for which they'd receive a free trip to Toronto and 200 Euros to spend. Instead, they ended up in a Canadian jail and subsequently in Brampton court, where the two were convicted of importing a controlled substance and sentenced to time served. Then they were deported -- she to California and he to London -- bringing an end to their love affair. Neither will ever be allowed to enter Canada again. ... Tonnes of illegal *khat* enter Canada every year and only a portion is intercepted. Seizures rise every year [530 at Pearson airport alone last year, valued at \$5.9 million], but the amount being shipped is also on the rise. Although illegal in Canada and the United States, the drug is legal in Britain and many parts of Africa and the Middle East. However, it has a shelf life of only about three days before it loses potency. [A bundle of 12 pieces of *khat* cut on an East African hillside on Thursday morning can pass through Heathrow and Pearson airports and be sold for \$90 a bundle on the streets of Toronto by Friday night or Saturday morning.] That's why the smugglers are trying to get their shipments to North America as quickly as possible and why Pearson is the *khat* gateway to the Canadian market. The **RCMP** and Canada Customs officers who intercept *khat* shipments at Pearson say couriers -- who range from students to businessmen to seniors -- are recruited through the **Internet**, newspaper ads or word-of-mouth to smuggle the drug here. ... Many of the couriers say they are told by smugglers the *khat* is herbal tea, being sent to health food stores in Canada. Whether the bark-like plant arrives in a tourist's suitcase or in a huge cargo box labelled 'fresh-cut flowers,' undercover police say the shipments quickly change hands at Pearson to avoid further decay, and in hours are distributed to a network of *khat* houses in the Toronto area. Most of the *khat* is destined for an area about 15 minutes away from the airport [to] highrise apartment buildings along Dixon Rd., from Kipling Ave. east to Islington Ave., [where police and security have found and squashed six *khat* dens in] an area dubbed 'Little Mogadishu' due to the large number of Somali immigrants residing there. Detectives say *khat* smugglers are becoming more brazen as they try to keep up with the rising demand for the product. [**Nasir**

**Hudleh**, also known as **Mohamed Mohamed**] was charged last December with recruiting as *khat* smugglers two northern Ontario teens he met on an **Internet** dating site. The teens were charged with importing a controlled substance and appeared in Brampton court earlier this month. The arrests came when police seized suitcases containing 45 kilos of *khat*. The girls told police they were given \$500 spending money, airline tickets and a week's vacation in London. ... Mohamed, 30, of Toronto, has also been charged with conspiracy and importing a controlled substance. He is currently before the courts. ... **Toronto Police Supt. Ron Taverner** is on the front-line of the war against *khat*. Most of the tonnes of the drug arriving in Canada end up in his **23 Division**, where it poses a variety of concerns. ... He says his officers routinely respond to domestic calls in the area and in many cases the use, and spending of family money on *khat* by a breadwinner, is a cause of the problem. ... *Khat* leaves contain naturally occurring psychoactive ingredients known as cathinone -- a euphoric stimulant chemically similar to amphetamine -- and cathine, a milder form of cathinone. ... *Khat* consumption can induce euphoria, excitement and hallucinations, but prolonged use can also cause manic behaviour, paranoia, and liver, heart and lung problems. ... Taverner said *khat* is widely available in his precinct and he's concerned some cabbies are chewing the drug and getting high while driving. 'There are health and safety concerns with this drug,' he says. 'There are no tests to determine if a driver is under the influence of *khat*.' ... Taverner says newcomers can be denied Canadian citizenship if they've obtained a criminal record from *khat*. ... Taverner [also] said an 11-year-old boy was picked up by police last year while bickering over a *khat* sale. The child was released because he was too young to be charged." (Toronto Sun, June 18, 2007)

### How's My Driving?

"Nobody has forged documents,' [according to] **Kamal Singh**, of **South West Driving Academy Ltd.** ... **South West** (also known as **Punjab Driving Schools Inc.**) has been named in a 108-page search warrant application filed in **Surrey Provincial Court** by **ICBC's Special Investigation Unit**. The warrant alleged managers at South West offered to sell an undercover police officer fake letters from Indian motor vehicle authorities to show he'd been driving accident-free for at least three years in India's Punjab region. ... Under **B.C.** law, an applicant for a commercial truck licence must first obtain a regular driver's licence, something that can take up to three years, and then have driven trouble-free for at least three more years. However, an applicant who can prove he acquired the equivalent amount of required driving experience in their country of origin can bypass the process. ... The officer said he was advised to 'dirty up' a freshly forged Indian driver's licence by stepping on it, applying a mustard oil to it and by 'rubbing it against something and chewing off the corners.' ... Last July, **ICBC** quietly tightened the rules for newcomers to Canada to prevent them from using forged documents to fake their way through the **B.C.** commercial truck driver's test. ... **ICBC** spokesman **Doug McClelland** said the new rules were a response to reports that some newcomers from India, China and other countries were using forged papers to fake their way past the requirements for a Class One licence at locations in Surrey, Richmond and other communities." (Peace Arch News, June 29, 2007) "Three more [driving schools] are also being probed after former students were found to have forged documents exaggerating their driving experience. Using fake foreign papers, and on the strength of shoddy or bogus reference letters, it appears at least 160 truckers climbed into the cabs of tractor-trailers with little or no road time. ... It's bad enough poorly trained truckers are on the roads. Disastrous results could occur in hospitals or on structural projects should bogus doctor or engineers fake their way onto the payroll." (Surrey Leader, June 22, 2007)