

## Archive Package: 1923–1946 (Exclusion Act)

### Quote Sheet: 1923–1946

#### **Fred Soon**

Born in Canton, China, in 1908.

Immigrated to Vancouver with uncle and cousins in 1921.

“ I didn't have the opportunity of higher education. My father was a worker, he didn't have too much money. I wanted to finish high school and he said, “Forget it, you won't get very much ahead.” Then I wanted to go to a technical school, I wanted to be a mechanic or an engineer and start out in the technological field. I tried to do that, and before the season was half over my father took me out of that school. “Are you crazy? You'll never get a job, you'll never get anything like that. Even in a garage they won't hire you.” I took a commercial course, because he said when you take a commercial course, you don't have to rely on people to hire you, you can own a business, you can hold on to your job.

“ The Chinese children who were born here had no trouble integrating with the white children. It was the immigrant children like myself [who had trouble]. Naturally you come up with a lot of discrimination amongst children because some of them don't want to play with you, and you can't blame them because it's just like a chicken and a duck, they don't talk the same language.

## Dr. So Won Leung

Born in Canton, China in 1916.

Immigrated to Canada in 1922.

“ It was good for the *politicians* to use the Orientals as an issue. If you look at the newspapers of those years, you’ll find all these inflammatory speeches by the politicians. They’re the ones, actually, who caused most of the trouble—the pamphlets being written by them and the speeches they made, and so on. That didn’t happen in any other province. None of the other provinces had discriminatory laws as they had in British Columbia, and mainly because the Chinese and the Japanese could be seen here.

We, amongst many other people in groups, acted to get the franchise. I was president of the Army and Navy Veterans for a couple of years. We made briefs to Ottawa, we helped to arouse the interest of the people in the elections that were held and took a very active part in the elections so that the people could become more involved.

## Mary Lee Chan

Born in Vancouver in 1915.

Mother of Shirley Chan.

“ Up on Slocan Street, it was all trees, all forest. I was afraid to go to school because the kids would beat me up. There were very few Chinese families up that way. In the winters, when he wasn’t gardening, my father carried coal and sawdust for white families, washed the floors, that kind of work. By the time they had been married twelve years, my mother had had eleven babies. And about 1923 he decided to take us all back to China—we were so poor, there was no food, and no work.

Excerpts from:

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