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British India Corporation Limited (BIC) is a Public Sector Undertaking of the Ministry of Textiles. The company produces textiles for use by civilians & the Indian armed forces. It manufactures "Lal-Imli" & "Dhariwal" brands of woollen products. Its history dates back to 1876

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Five Kanpur residents and merchants, George Allen, W.E. Cooper, Bevan Petman, J. Condon and Gavin S. Jones, between 1876 and 1894, started woollen mills, cotton mills and leather factories in the city.

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In 1920, Sir Alexander MacRobert, a self-made millionaire from Aberdeen, UK, acquired these mills in Kanpur and established British India Corporation as a public limited company.

(Pic: Sir Alexander MacRobert with Georgina, his first wife, in 1886)

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The Corporation had two Woollen Mills directly owned and run by it, namely, Cawnpore Woollen Mills, Kanpur and New Egerton Woollen Mills, Dhariwal. Together, these units employed about 8000 persons.

(Pic: Cawnpore Woollen Mills Ltd, Kanpur)

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Besides, BIC also had substantial shares in various other companies, like the Elgin Mills Co. Ltd., Brushware Ltd., Cawnpore Textiles Ltd., Cawnpore Sugar Works Ltd., Champaran Sugar Co. Ltd., Saran Engineering Co. etc.

(Pic: Share certificate of Cawnpore Sugar Works Ltd)

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Acquired by Haridas Mundhra around 1952, BIC was the centre of the so-called Mundhra scandal of 1956. It was under government management from the late-1950s and nationalized in 1981 by an Act of Parliament- British India Corporation Limited (Acquisition of Shares) Act, 1981.

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From 1950s till 1981, the President of India and Public Financial Institutions together held substantial shares in the Corporation. The other major shareholding belonged to the Bajoria family of Kolkata headed by Shri B.P. Bajoria.

(Pic: Shri B.P. Bajoria)

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In 1981, it was nationalised and taken over by the Government of India. Failed to generate profits and mounting liabilities, the company ceased manufacturing in 2005 but still employs 1,800 people. New weaving machines installed in 2005 have never been used.

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P.S.- My father worked with two companies of the British India Corporation (in the 1990s and early 2000s), namely the Cawnpore Sugar Works Ltd. and the Champaran Sugar Co. Ltd.