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A HISTORY OF REVELSTOKE
AND THE BIG BEND

by

WILLIAM WINSTANLEY BILSLAND

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
in the Department
of
History

We accept this thesis as conforming to the
standard required from candidates for the
degree of MASTER OF ARTS

Members of the Department
of History

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

April, 1955

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LES B7
1955 A2
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ABSTRACT

A HISTORY OF REVELSTOKE

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In the writing of this thesis I have attempted to outline the history of the region lying within what is known as the Big Bend of the Columbia River north of the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway and west of the summit of the Selkirk Range. The work is intended to be an historical study of an area which white men first penetrated in search of furs and later used as an overland means of access to the Crown Colony of British Columbia. I have tried to explain why and how the area first became known. Then I discuss the mining activities in the Big Bend in the 1860's and subsequent years, and go on to portray the most important single event in Revelstoke's history, the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway in the 1880's. In the 1890's the activities of the railway company, lumbering and mining in the vicinity of Revelstoke led to the incorporation of the town as a city. Since 1899 the city and surrounding region have endured periods of rapid growth and eras of recessions and depressions causing a slowing of the rate of development. I have tried to depict the history of the city and area as they grew in population, concentrating on the major aspects of Revelstoke's past, the transportation,

mining and logging industries. I have also attempted to outline the growth of the Revelstoke community in the political, social and economic fields. Finally, I have tried to summarize by explaining what Revelstoke is today, and how the city has become what it is. This thesis is primarily intended as a local history study, a small contribution to the general knowledge of the history of British Columbia. I consider that many such studies as this one are essential before properly trained historians will be able to produce competent, scholarly works on the major aspects of the political, social and economic history of the province of British Columbia.

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Preface

The student of history who is required to offer a thesis as part of the requirements for his degree often finds himself in a dilemma. From his source material he is usually expected to secure data illustrative of his topic, to present that material logically and concisely, and to outline a "problem," or "problems," which, in the course of his thesis, he resolves. Sometimes, however, he is unfortunate; he has no "problem." He has an interesting field in which to work; he struggles long and hard to exhaust the source material on the topic; and he presents his evidence, often never before known or gathered, as best he can. His problem, really, has been the problem of finding his source material, sometimes easily, more often arduously. His task has been that of making available to future researchers material with which to solve "problems" which, in his pioneering, he either missed entirely or else was forced to overlook in order to concentrate on presenting his story. This particular thesis suffers from the lack of any soluble problems, but its thesis, the story of the development of the Revelstoke-Big Bend region to its present status, permits the study of several ancient problems still in existence, and to summarize the major developments or trends of the area.

The Big Bend came into prominence with the gold rush of 1865, and for two brief years was the centre of the mining

activities of an area noted for its mineral possibilities. Then a twenty-year period of relative calm descended over the region while British Columbia and Canada schemed to build a great railway to link Canada "from sea to sea" with bonds of steel. Since 1885 Revelstoke has been a railway centre, with important resources, as well, in the adjacent mineral deposits and forests. The story of the development of these resources, and of the transportation links, whether by water, rail or road, has provided Revelstoke with much of the glamour of its past. In addition, the communal growth of Revelstoke to the status of a city in 1899, and the subsequent development after incorporation has steadily fulfilled many of the hopes of the pioneers who worked strenuously to bring about the status of Revelstoke today.

I wish to acknowledge the invaluable assistance of Dr. Margaret A. Ormsby in the preparation of this thesis. I am also indebted to the staff of the Provincial Archives, and my wife.

Chapter One

Natural description

My road calls me, lures me
West, east, south, and north;
Most roads lead men homewards,
My road leads me forth

To add more miles to the tally
Of grey miles left behind,
In quest of that one beauty
God put me here to find.¹

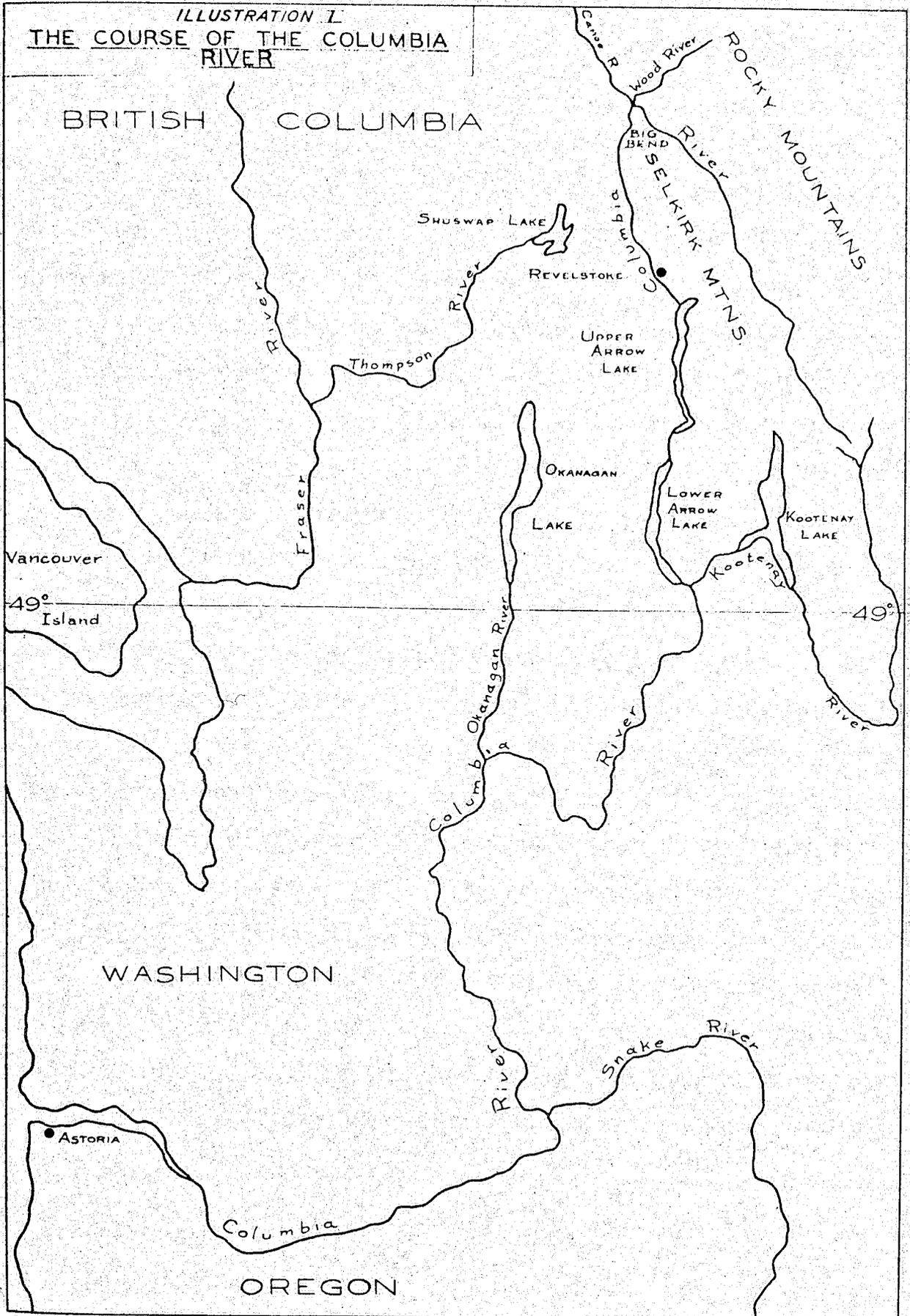
In writing the above lines John Masefield might easily have been describing the wandering quest of one of America's great rivers, the Columbia, for its goal, the Pacific Ocean. When Captain Robert Gray first navigated his ship, the Columbia Rediviva, into the mouth of the Columbia River in 1792, and named the unknown river for his vessel, he little realized the length of the waterway, or the nature of the country through which it passes. The physical setting of the Columbia River, the Big Bend region and Revelstoke is one of the finest examples of the handiwork of Nature.² The river rises in the Rocky Mountain Trench, the area in which most of the great rivers of British Columbia originate, and flows, relatively quietly, north-west, between the Rocky Mountains on the east and the Selkirk Range to the west, until it reaches the site of Boat Encampment.

1 Masefield, John, "Roadways," in The poems and plays of John Masefield, New York, Macmillan, 1919, 2 vols., vol. 1, p. 94.

2 For further details on the physical setting of the Columbia River and the Selkirk Range, see: Canada, Department of the Interior, Dominion Parks Branch, Through the heart of the Rockies and Selkirks, Ottawa, King's Printer, 1924; and: British Columbia, Department of Lands, Revelstoke and Golden Land Recording District, Victoria, King's Printer, 1949. (Bulletin series, no. 21, 1949.)

There, after being joined by the waters of the Canoe and Wood rivers from the north, the Columbia abruptly leaves the Rocky Mountain Trench, sheds its peaceful ways, swings around the northern end of the Selkirks, reverses its course and begins its southward rampage, now having the Selkirk Range on its eastern bank and the Monashee Mountains on the western shore. As the river follows its course it becomes increasingly turbulent, and, after receiving the waters of Bigmouth Creek from the east, roars its way through Gordon Rapids, the first of the numerous rough passages in the river. Farther south, Kirbyville Creek from the west and Goldstream from the east join the Columbia. Into Goldstream from the north flow French and McCulloch creeks. Kirbyville, Goldstream, French and McCulloch creeks were all prominent names in the days of the Big Bend gold rush in 1865 and 1866. Below Goldstream there is a series of wild rapids - Twelve Mile, Death and Priest - before Downie Creek joins the Columbia from the east, just south of the old site of La Porte, the place where the steamers plying the river ended their journeys. Below Downie Creek the Eighteen Mile Rapids intervene before the Columbia receives the waters of Carnes Creek from the east. As the river approaches Revelstoke it passes through the Little Dalles Canyon and Steamboat Rapids, and then reaches the Big Eddy, just north of the city. Between Steamboat Rapids and the Big Eddy, the Jordan River joins the Columbia from the west. Opposite Revelstoke the Tonkawatla River also pours its waters into the Columbia, while, south of the city, the turbulent Illecillewaet

ILLUSTRATION I
THE COURSE OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER



(the "swift river") ends its wild, western flight from the glaciers in the heart of the Selkirks.

Below Revelstoke the Columbia River gradually quiets in its course, passing the settlements of Greenslide, Wigwam and Sidmouth, and then expands into the Upper Arrow Lake at Arrowhead. Along the North East Arm of the Upper Arrow Lake are the towns of Comaplix, at the mouth of the Incomappleux River, and Beaton, at the head of the Arm. Up the Incomappleux (the Kootenay Indian word for "fish") is the town of Camborne. In the form of the Upper Arrow Lake the Columbia River continues its way southward, narrows at West Demars, and then expands again at Burton into the Lower Arrow Lake. Below the Arrow Lakes the Columbia and Kootenay rivers unite at Brilliant, and then the Columbia crosses the international boundary near Waneta. It flows in a southwestward direction to a point near Brewster, Washington, where it receives another tributary, the Okanogan River. There the Columbia once more swings southward and joins the Snake River near Richland, Washington. The Columbia then turns westward in its course, becoming a part of the state border between Washington and Oregon, and flows on to the Pacific Ocean near Astoria, Oregon.

One writer has described the Columbia as "the most whimsical of great rivers,"³ and calls its valley a "patchwork of odds and ends and misfits of older valleys having a strange history not yet unravelled."⁴ The Columbia is "whimsical," but it, and the

³ Coleman, A.P., The Canadian Rockies, new and old trails, Toronto, Frowde, 1911, p.49.

⁴ Loc. cit.

country through which it passes, are also majestic. Another description says that the Columbia encompasses the magnificent Selkirk Range like a moat encircles a craggy fortress.⁵ The peaks of the Selkirks, on the average, are now 1,000 to 2,000 feet lower than the mountains of the adjacent Rockies, but, millions of years ago, the Selkirks, older than the Rockies, were also higher. Today the Selkirks, more rounded by the thumb of time than the Rockies, lack the sharp spires, pinnacles and summits which make the Rockies so picturesque. The Selkirks, however, excel in the luxuriance of their forests, and in the extent and mass of ice which cover their summits throughout the year. The solid mountain wall of the snow-capped range, approached from either the eastern or western side, is impressive.

The Big Bend district is approximately that region north of the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, enclosed by the bend of the Columbia River.⁶ The entire area is rugged, the mountains rising rapidly from the river's shores. The lower hills and benches are covered with a heavy growth of timber, including Douglas Fir, cedar and white pine. The timber line extends to an altitude of approximately 6,000 feet above the river. On the divides between the creeks and rivers there is a considerable area of what might be termed a rolling plateau

5 Canada, Department of the Interior, Dominion Parks Branch, Through the heart of the Rockies and Selkirks, Ottawa, King's Printer, 1924, p. 4.

6 The topography of the Big Bend region is adequately described in: Canada, Department of Mines, Geological Survey of Canada, A geological reconnaissance between Golden and Kamloops, B.C., along the Canadian Pacific Railway, Ottawa, King's Printer, 1915. (Memoir series, no. 68.)

or parkland, from which the mountain peaks rise another 1,000 to 2,000 feet. The valleys of the creeks offer access to this parkland.

Revelstoke itself is a natural gateway to several of the adjacent regions - the Big Bend, the Eagle Pass, the Illecillewaet Valley, the Arrow Lakes and the Trout Lake-Lardeau area. At an altitude of 1,494 feet above sea level,⁷ it nestles on a fairly extensive tract of level land on the east bank of the Columbia, north of the junction of the Illecillewaet and Columbia rivers. It possesses a site suitable for the growth of a large, spacious city. The surrounding soil is rich, admirably suited for local truck-gardening. Overlooking the city are hundreds of peaks of the Selkirk and Gold ranges. North of the city, Mount Revelstoke, a part of the Clachnacudainn Range, stretches up to a height of 6,700 feet. The entire mountain is included in Mount Revelstoke National Park. From its peak, easily accessible by the Royal Highway, there is a magnificent view of the city, the Columbia and the Illecillewaet. South of Revelstoke Mount Mackenzie stretches 8,100 feet towards the sky. To the southwest, across the Columbia, are the great Sentinels of the Gold Range, Mount Macpherson, 7,900 feet high, and Mount Begbie, almost 9,000 feet in height. All of these peaks provide a beautiful natural setting for the city, giving it a perpetual background of ice, snow and mountain blue.

7 The location and climate of the Revelstoke-Big Bend region are discussed in: British Columbia, Department of Agriculture, Climate of British Columbia, Victoria, King's Printer, 1950, pp. 7, 19-20, 23.

The area from Revelstoke to Boat Encampment has a very heavy snowfall every winter, but little rain. During the period from 1900 to 1950 there has been an average, annual precipitation of forty inches, including both rain and snow. The average, annual fall of snow is 141 inches. Between April 1 and September 30, the rainfall is about nineteen inches. Over a period of forty-nine years, the average mean temperature at Revelstoke was forty-four degrees, and in 1950 the extremes of temperature at Revelstoke ranged from ninety-four degrees in July to twenty-two degrees in January. In the winters the mountains, benches, creeks and forests are silent, covered with snow and ice. In the summers, however, all types of flowers blossom profusely, and, in the area, mountain goats, caribou, black, brown and grizzly bears, ducks and grouse carry on their routine lives, seldom disturbed by human activities.

Chapter Two

Early exploration

Lawrence Burpee has described David Thompson as the discoverer of the sources of the Columbia River, the first white man to travel the upper reaches and tributaries of the Columbia and the pathfinder of more than one way across the continental divide between the waters of the Saskatchewan and Athabaskan rivers and the Columbia River. Thompson, said Burpee, was also the greatest geographer of his day, and the maker of what, in his era, was the best map of British North America.¹ Although Burpee's claims about Thompson are almost incredible, they are all true. Between 1784 and 1797 David Thompson² was in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company. In the latter year he joined the Northwest Company, the aggressive combination of the shrewd Scottish "pedlars" of Montreal and the French-Canadian voyageurs, and spent the greatest years of his life with the Northwest Company. After the Northwest Company amalgamated with one of its rivals, the XY Company, in 1804, it decided to send its traders into the country west of the Rockies to gain the furs of the Indians there. In

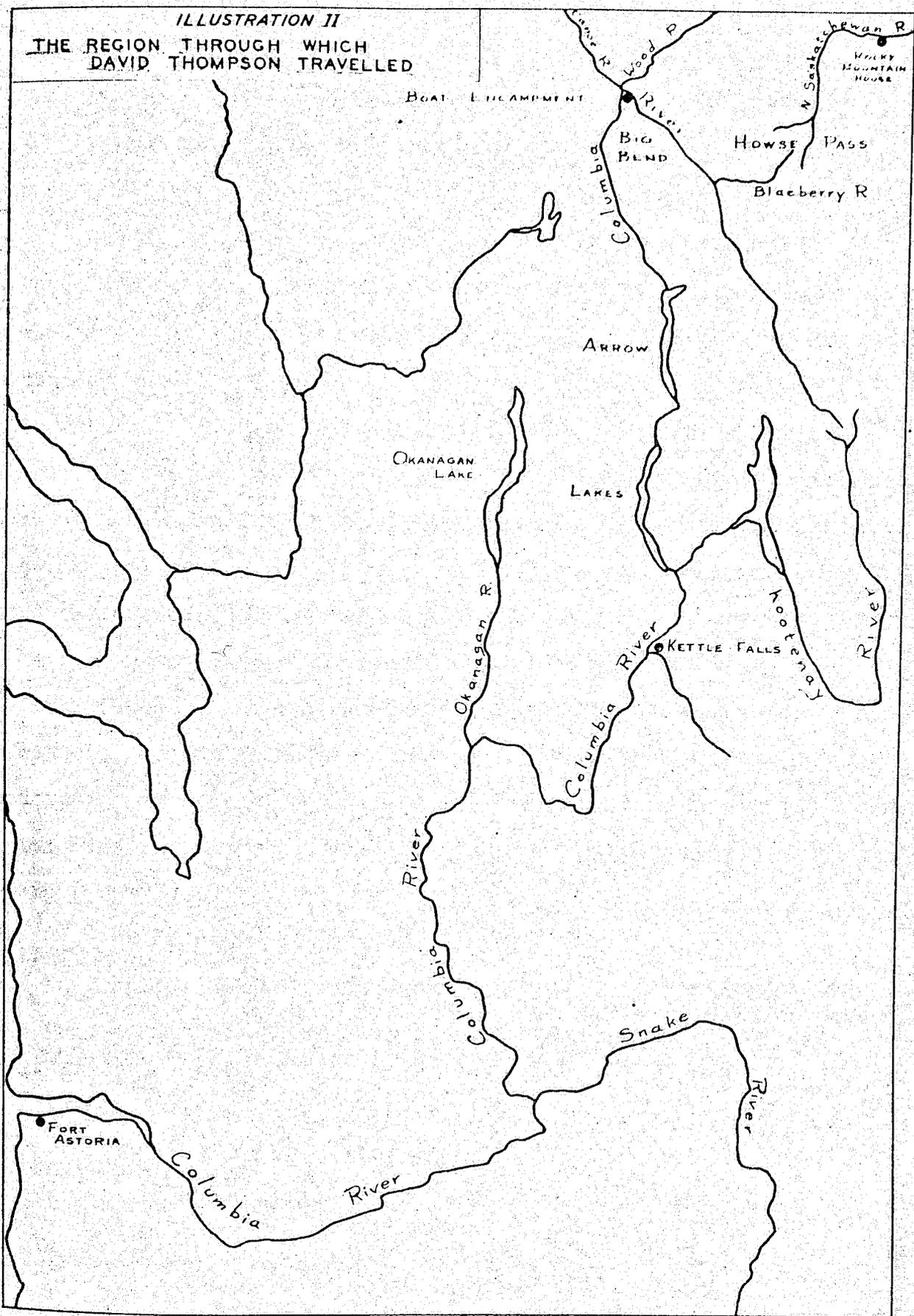
1 Burpee, L.J., The search for the western sea; the story of the exploration of northwestern America, London, Alston Rivers, 1908, p. 559.

2 The best work on the life of David Thompson is that edited and annotated by J. B. Tyrrell, and it has been used extensively in the recounting here of Thompson's activities: Thompson, David, David Thompson's narrative of his explorations in western America, 1784-1812, edited by J. B. Tyrrell, Toronto, Champlain Society, 1916. (Champlain Society Publications.)

1807 Thompson led a party of Nor'Westers from Rocky Mountain House, on the Saskatchewan River, through Howse Pass to the Columbia River. From that moment until 1812, when he recrossed the Rockies for the last time, he explored every inch of the Columbia River between its source and mouth. In 1807 he first ascended the Columbia from Blaeberry River to Kootenay House. In the following years, he continued his explorations of the great river to its source, finally crossing the divide to the Kootenay River, and going down the Kootenay to its junction with the Columbia.

Until 1810 Thompson used Howse Pass to cross the Rockies. In 1810, however, he found that the Piegan Indians were angry at his supplying of the Kootenay Indians with fire-arms. He decided to use Athabaska Pass to reach the Columbia River, thus avoiding the Piegans. Upon arriving on the Columbia, he went down the river to the point where the Canoe River empties into the Columbia from the north. He stepped ashore for the first time on January 26, 1811, at the site that later became famous as Boat Encampment. He then retraced his route up the Columbia River to its source and crossed overland to the Kootenay River. He went down the Kootenay to its junction with the Columbia, and then followed the Columbia to Fort Astoria, near the mouth of the river, arriving there on July 15, 1811. When Thompson returned from Fort Astoria, he followed the Columbia to the Snake River. After spending some time near Kettle Falls, he went up the Columbia to Boat Encampment, thus becoming the first white man ever to navigate the entire river. He did not

ILLUSTRATION II
THE REGION THROUGH WHICH
DAVID THOMPSON TRAVELLED



descend the whole river from its source to its mouth in one journey; he made his explorations in bits and pieces. When he went up the Columbia to Boat Encampment in 1811, however, he established the route which the future fur brigades of the Hudson's Bay Company were to follow for many years.

David Thompson was not the first white man to see the future site of Revelstoke. In his Journal³ Thompson tells us that Finan McDonald, a Scottish-born clerk of the Northwest Company, had led a party of four white men and two Indians from Kettle Falls up the Columbia River to a point a few miles above Revelstoke early in August, 1811, and had returned to Kettle Falls on August 27. The honour of being the first party of ^{white} men to see the future site of Revelstoke, therefore, belongs to the group led by McDonald⁴.

Thompson kept an accurate account of all his travels: recording the latitude and longitude of various places and the dates of his arrivals and departures from these points, noting the creeks and rivers which poured their waters into the Columbia and Kootenay rivers, describing the different tribes of Indians

3 Thompson, op. cit., p. 533, n. 1.

4 Little has been written about the life of Finan McDonald. Some material is to be found in: Meyers, J.A., "Finan McDonald - explorer, fur trader and legislator," Washington Historical Quarterly, vol. 13 (July, 1922), pp. 196-208.

which he met, and, in general, giving later explorers and travellers an accurate picture of the then unknown land across the Rockies. From his Journal, for example, we know that Thompson's party, on its way up the Columbia to Boat Encampment, camped at a point about two miles above Revelstoke on September 11, 1811.⁵ When Walter Moberly was exploring on behalf of the Crown Colony of British Columbia in the area near Revelstoke in 1865, he found on a fir tree a very old blaze noting the latitude and longitude, and signed by David Thompson.⁶ Moberly reported that Thompson's latitude and longitude were almost exactly correct. Considering the difficulties under which Thompson worked, he was a most expert geographer.

After 1812 Thompson went to Montreal, and never returned to the Columbia River. In 1813 and 1814 he prepared for the Northwest Company a general map of the country west of the Rockies, placing on it the results of his years of exploration. On his map he shows the Selkirk Range as "Nelson's Mountains," so named after Lord Horatio Nelson.⁷ After the union of the Northwest and Hudson's Bay companies in 1821, Nelson's Mountains

5 Thompson, op. cit., p. liii.

6 Moberly, Walter, The rocks and rivers of British Columbia, London, Blacklock, 1885, p. 43.

7 Wheeler, A.O., The Selkirk Mountains, Winnipeg, Stovel [1911?], p. 11.

became known as the Selkirk Mountains, in honour of the Earl of Selkirk, a prominent member of the Hudson's Bay Company, who was also the founder of the settlement on the Red River.⁸

When David Thompson landed at Boat Encampment on January 26, 1811, he established an important stopping-place for future travellers. Boat Encampment is situated at a strategic point in the Cordillera of North America, at the most northerly point of the Columbia River and also at the spot where the Canoe and Wood rivers join the Columbia. There, on the flats formed by the silt and gravels of three rivers and of three mountain systems - the Rockies and the Selkirk and Gold ranges - the fur brigades met in future years, hauled their boats out of the river, lit their camp fires and relaxed for a little while in a most congenial atmosphere. From east and west, the traffic of a continent met at Boat Encampment. Dr. James Hector, a geologist with the expedition of Captain John Palliser in the late 1850's, said that until as late as 1853 the regular express of the Hudson's Bay Company, laden with letters and accounts, set out in March, every year, from Edmonton for Boat Encampment.⁹ At Boat Encampment the express would exchange mail with the express from the western areas, and then would return to Edmonton and Norway House. In September, also, brigades would set out from Edmonton, via the Athabaska Pass and Boat Encampment, for Fort Vancouver, carrying a subsidy of otter skins which,

⁸ Wheeler, The Selkirk Mountains, p. 11.

⁹ Cited in Burpee, L. J., On the old Athabaska trail, Toronto, Ryerson, 1926, p. 195.

beginning in 1839, the company paid annually to the Russian Government for the rent of a portion of the northwest coast.¹⁰

In the years to come, almost every noted western explorer and missionary was to spend some time at the site of Boat Encampment. David Douglas, a botanist who collected botanical specimens in North America for the Royal Horticultural Society (and for whom the Douglas Fir is named), landed at Boat Encampment on April 27, 1827, and thus described his impressions of the region:

How familiar soever high snowy mountains may have been to us where in such a case we might be expected to lose that just notion of their immense altitude, yet on beholding the grand dividing ridge of the continent all that we have seen before disappears from the mind and is forgotten, by the height, the sharp and indescribably rugged peaks, the darkness of the rocks, the glacier and eternal snow.¹¹

Another noted traveller on the Columbia River was Paul Kane, the Irish-born artist. Brought up in Toronto, Kane studied art for several years in Europe, and then decided to visit the western mountains to paint on canvas what other pioneers recorded in ink. With the help of Sir George Simpson, the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, he joined the fur brigades, and spent three years, from 1845 to 1848, among the Indians and fur-traders on both sides of the Rocky Mountains. He studied the ways of the fur-trade, the magnificent scenery, and the manners and customs of the Indians, recording his

¹⁰ Burpee, On the old Athabaska trail, p. 195.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 128. For a detailed study of Douglas' life see: Harvey, A.G., Douglas of the fir, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1947.

impressions by oil sketches. When he returned to eastern Canada, he took with him over 300 sketches, of which one depicts Boat Encampment, a point which he saw at least twice. In 1859, also, Kane published a narrative of his expedition, and thus left a good record of his experiences and observations in the country through which he had passed.¹²

In 1857 the British Government decided to send Captain John Palliser to investigate the advantages of British North America for settlement, and to inquire into the possibilities of building a transcontinental railway through British territory in North America in order to provide a safe and direct means of communication with the British possessions in the Orient.¹³

Captain Palliser, Dr. James Hector and other members of the party devoted three years to their task, spending much of that time in the Rockies and the Selkirk and Gold ranges. In his report, Palliser advised against the construction of a railway through the mountains because of the great expense of such a difficult project, and also defined the boundaries of his famous "triangle" of land in the southern part of the prairie provinces, labelling it as unfit for extensive cultivation.

By the early 1860's the discoveries of gold on the Fraser River and in the Cariboo had forced the officials of the Crown Colony of British Columbia to give some thought to the provision

¹² Kane, Paul, Wanderings of an artist among the Indians of North America from Canada to Vancouver's Island and Oregon through the Hudson's bay company's territory and back again, London, Longman, 1859.

¹³ For details of the Palliser expedition see: Denholm, J.J., The Palliser survey, 1857-1860, M.A. thesis, U.B.C., April, 1950.

of means of communication through the regions covered by the Canadian portion of the Cordillera. In the fall of 1864 Frederick Seymour, the governor of the colony, sent a party led by George Turner, a former member of the Royal Engineers, to explore for a road to the Kootenays.¹⁴ Turner's group left Yale on October 4, and went via Kamloops, the South Thompson River, Shuswap Lake and over the divide to the Columbia, not far from Death Rapids. The party went first to Boat Encampment, and then descended the Columbia. Turner's men prospected on the bars of the river, and found gold in paying quantities, from two to five cents per pan. Turner reported that there were miners working on the tributaries of the Columbia, and that some of them were doing well. The expedition returned to New Westminster on December 28, 1864.

In the following year, 1865, the government despatched Walter Moberly¹⁵ to the Kootenays for exploration purposes. Moberly is a most important man in the story of the early exploration of the Big Bend of the Columbia River. He was born in England in 1832, and went to Barry, Ontario, in 1835. He subsequently became a civil engineer, first being employed

14 For further details of the Turner expedition, see: New Westminster British Columbian, November 16, 1864, January 4, 1865; Victoria Colonist, January 6, 1865; and Scholefield, E.O.S., and Howay, F.W., British Columbia from the earliest times to the present, Vancouver, Clarke, 1914, vol. 2, p. 232.

15 For the biographical details of Moberly's life, see: Morgan, H.J., The Canadian men and women of the time, Toronto, Briggs, 1898, pp. 640-641; Wallace, W.S., comp., The dictionary of Canadian biography, 2d ed., Toronto, Macmillan, 1945, vol. 2, p. 457; and Robinson, Noel, Blazing the trail through the Rockies; the story of Walter Moberly and his share in the making of Vancouver, Vancouver, News-Advertiser Press, 1915, passim.

on the Ontario, Simcoe and Huron Railway. Between 1854 and 1858 he was a good friend of Paul Kane, the artist who had visited the west in the 1840's.¹⁶ From Kane's long and detailed descriptions of the Canadian West, Moberly acquired a strong desire to visit western North America. In 1859 he entered the civil service of British Columbia under Colonel R. C. Moody of the Royal Engineers, and laid out the site of New Westminster, the capital-to-be. He then left the civil service for a while, and engaged in prospecting for coal, trying to promote a tramway, and surveying. In the winter of 1859-1860 he met Captain Palliser and Dr. Hector, and was disappointed to hear that Palliser considered infeasible a railway from Lake Superior to the Pacific Coast - a project which Moberly had already conceived.¹⁷ In 1860 and 1861 he was employed on the Dewdney Trail, and from 1862 to 1864 worked on the Cariboo Road. In the fall of 1864 he secured the seat for Cariboo West in the Legislative Council of British Columbia, believing that there he could best strive for his project, a railway through the mountains. In 1865 he resigned his seat to become the Assistant Surveyor-General for the Colony of British Columbia, and embarked upon the first of his journeys of exploration.

On July 8, 1865, Moberly was commissioned by the Government to carry out explorations from Kamloops to the Rockies, and to select a route for a wagon road from the lower Fraser River to the Columbia or Kootenay rivers.¹⁸ In view of the recent discoveries of gold on the Columbia River above the

16 Moberly, Rocks and rivers, p. 9.

17 Ibid., p. 33.

Arrow Lakes, the government hoped that its surveyors would find a pass for a wagon road between Lytton, Kamloops Lake and Shuswap. Moberly first went to Shuswap Lake, and, at the eastern end of the lake, noticed a valley (the Eagle River Valley) running eastward into the Gold Range exactly where he had hoped to find a pass. He was unable to explore the valley thoroughly, however, since he had to lead his party over the divide between Seymour Arm of Shuswap Lake and the Columbia River. Twenty years later he thus described his first view of the pass:

In the summer of 1865, I was exploring the Gold range of mountains for the Government of British Columbia, to see if there was any pass through them. I arrived at the Eagle River, and on the top of a tree near its mouth I saw a nest full of eaglets, and the two old birds on a limb of the same tree. I had nothing but a small revolver in the shape of firearms; this I discharged eight or ten times at the nest, but could not knock it down. The two old birds, after circling around the nest, flew up the valley of the river; it struck me then, if I followed them, I might find the much wished-for pass. I explored the valley two or three weeks afterwards, and having been successful in finding a good pass, I thought the most appropriate name I could give it was the 'Eagle Pass.'¹⁹

When Moberly reached the Columbia, he and his companion, Albert Perry, and some Indians built a canoe. Then the two white men, with an Indian boy, went down the river to the Upper Arrow Lake. Moberly, himself, described the journey:

We were swept along at a grand rate, and at last found the river getting narrow, with high rocky banks and over-hanging cliffs. I was in the middle of the canoe taking bearings, estimating distances, &c., the Indian boy in the bow, and Perry steering. The boy suddenly exclaimed 'Wake closhe chuck, - konaway nameluce,'

¹⁹ Moberly, op. cit., p. 39.

which is 'bad water - all will be killed;' he put in his paddle and lay down in the bottom of the canoe. I crawled over him, and getting hold of the paddle Perry and I managed to keep the canoe out of the whirls, &c., that threatened to suck us down. At one moment we were on the edge of one of these dangerous places, and the next swept a hundred yards away by a tremendous 'boil.' Sometimes one end of the canoe became the bow, and at other times the opposite end, but at length we reached a little sandy cove and landed in still water. We had run²⁰ the 'Little Dalles' without knowing it.

It was on this journey, just after the passage of the Little Dalles, that Moberly found Thompson's old blaze on a fir tree. Moberly then entered Eagle Pass from the eastern side, and on a small cedar tree blazed "This is the Pass for the Overland Railway."²¹ He returned to his depot on the Columbia, and then, with a group of Indians, journeyed to the valley of the Illecillewaet River to find a pass through the Selkirks. He reached the point where the Illecillewaet River forks, one branch going north and the other continuing east. Moberly followed the northern branch (then known as the "North Fork of the Illecillewaet" but now called "Tangier Creek.") After the party had penetrated a few miles up the North Fork, the Indians refused to go any farther, saying that winter was near, and that the valley both behind and before them would soon become impassable with snow.²² Regretfully, Moberly had to turn back, thus ending his explorations for 1865.

In October, 1865, Moberly received instructions from the

20 Moberly, Rocks and rivers, pp. 40-41.

21 Ibid., p. 44.

22 Ibid., p. 45.

government to act as Gold Commissioner on the Columbia River.²³ He was the first such officer in the Big Bend area. He served as Gold Commissioner for a short time, and then, after giving Robert T. Smith the necessary powers to issue mining certificates and to record claims,²⁴ returned to New Westminster.

In 1866 Moberly returned to the Columbia as soon as travel was possible. He laid out a trail from La Porte, at the head of navigation, to the mining creeks, and also directed the clearing of a pack trail through the snows between Seymour and the Columbia. In addition, he laid out a townsite at French Creek. He then made a survey of the Columbia from its source to Kirbyville Creek, and returned to New Westminster. While he was descending the Columbia east of the Selkirks, he looked longingly into the Kicking Horse and Howse passes, but did not have time to explore them.

At the end of the season of 1866, Moberly left the civil service, and spent much of the next five years in the United States. In 1871 the federal government appointed him the District Engineer for the region between Shuswap Lake and the easterly foothills of the Rockies.²⁵ Moberly planned to make a survey through Howse and Kicking Horse passes, then to follow the Columbia around the Big Bend to Eagle Pass, cross the Selkirk Range by the southeasterly branch of the Illecillewaet, and

²³ British Columbia, Department of Lands and Works, Columbia River Exploration, 1865 (hereafter referred to as Columbia River Exploration, 1865), New Westminster, Government Printing Office, 1866, p. 7.

²⁴ Loc. cit.

²⁵ Moberly, Rocks and rivers, p. 62.

then head east to the headwaters of the Saskatchewan. He went down the Columbia to Gold River, on the eastern flank of the Selkirks, and there decided to try an east-to-west crossing of the Selkirk Range. He ascended the Gold River to its source, and then, via a pass over 5,800 feet high (now known as Moberly Pass), crossed over to the headwaters of Goldstream, which drain westward into the Columbia. He followed Goldstream to the nearly-deserted mining town of French Creek, where he met A. W. Vowell, the Resident Gold Commissioner. He then travelled to the totally deserted settlement at McCulloch Creek. From there he went to La Porte on the Columbia, thus becoming the first-known white man ever to cross the rugged Selkirk Range. At La Porte, incidentally, he found only one man.²⁶ The year of 1871 was a far cry from 1866 when the creeks of the Big Bend were swarming with miners. From the Columbia, Moberly returned to New Westminster, and wired Sir Sandford Fleming, the officer in charge of the railway surveys, that a line of railway via the Eagle Pass and the Big Bend of the Columbia was practicable.

In the period between 1871 and 1874 Moberly's entire energy was devoted to the fulfilment of his dream, the finding of the best possible route for a railway across the Gold, Selkirk and Rocky Mountains. In January, 1874, he went to Ottawa to file reports of his work. The night of his arrival in the capital, he left his papers for safe-keeping in a building of the federal government. That night fire destroyed the building and his plans.²⁷ The loss, both to Moberly and

26 Moberly, op. cit., p. 71.

27 Ibid., p. 97.

the Canadian Pacific Railway, was great.

In 1874 Moberly left the government's service, and was succeeded in the work of mountain surveys by Major A. B. Rogers. Moberly went to the Prairies, working there in an engineering capacity for some years, and then returned to British Columbia. His last years were saddened by comparative poverty. He died in Vancouver on May 14, 1915.

Today Walter Moberly's name is undeservedly unknown to most people of British Columbia. Moberly may rightly be considered the first of the modern explorers of the Selkirk Range. He was a man of vision who foresaw the day when a railway would run through the mountains. His life was part and parcel of the history of the Canadian Pacific Railway: he discovered the Eagle Pass; explored the Illecillewaet to its forks; crossed the Selkirk Range for the first time by a route north of Rogers Pass; examined the route around the Big Bend - the route which the Big Bend Highway eventually followed; and almost discovered Rogers Pass.²⁸

With the end of the work of Moberly comes the end of the story of the early explorations of the Big Bend. Thereafter, all the surveying and mapping in the area becomes linked with the narrative of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

28 Wheeler, The Selkirk Mountains, p. 13.

Chapter Three
The Big Bend gold rush
and
subsequent mining.

Since the discovery of gold in large quantities on the bars of the Fraser River, gold rushes have played a large part in the history of British Columbia, causing the creation of the Crown Colony of British Columbia on the mainland, and then bringing a steady influx of people. In 1860 the first discoveries at Rock Creek were reported, and in 1861 the miners left Rock Creek to head the call of the gold of Cariboo. In 1863 and 1864 the flood was sweeping towards Wild Horse Creek. In 1865 and 1866 the Big Bend was prominent. In the late 1860's and early 1870's first Omineca and later Cassiar lured the prospectors. In 1898 the Argonauts were in the Yukon and, as an offshoot, pushed into the Atlin gold fields in the extreme northwestern portion of British Columbia. With every gold rush there has been a standard series of events: the early reporting of a strike, the stampede, the frantic recording and energetic working of claims, the "finds" of some miners and the disappointments of others. After the exhausting of the shallow diggings, the hydraulic mining processes appear. Subsequently most of the miners depart for newer, easier prospects. Finally, all types of mining activities cease, and Nature is left to hide the scars which man has inflicted upon her. The glamorous, but

brief, history of the rush to the Big Bend is similar to the general form of the average gold rush.

There are many stories of the discovery of gold on the Columbia River, and they have so obscured the actual first "strike" that it is now almost impossible to say definitely who first discovered gold in the Big Bend, and where and when he found it. It is definitely known, however, that William George Cox, the Gold Commissioner at Rock Creek, wrote to James Judson Young, the private secretary of Governor James Douglas, on October 19, 1861, as follows:

The Kootanais [sic] Indians report coarse gold some miles above the 'Boat Encampment' or Forks of Columbia River - 'Teneese' is the Indian from whom I gathered this information.¹

Uncertain of the disposition of the Indians of the Columbia and Kootenay rivers towards white men, Cox took steps to protect the lives and property of the miners when they were exploring the country.² On December 9, 1861, James Douglas, the Governor of the Crown Colony of British Columbia, wrote Cox to say:

As it is desirable to intercept the trade from the upper Columbia River at some point north of the 49th parallel... His Excellency trusts that you will make enquiries as to the best points for opening roads from the Shouswap [sic] Lake or Great Okanagan Lake to the Columbia River - in order that the miners may be supplied from Frasers [sic] River and not from Oregon. By reference to the map - which you received from me you will observe that a line of road is shown by a dotted line as leading from Shouswap Lake to the Columbia River beyond the Upper Lake -

1 Cox, W.G., to J.J. Young, October 19, 1861.

2 Loc. cit.

that trail is well known to the Indian population and possibly other trails leading direct from the Great Okanagan Lake to the Columbia may also be known to them. Make enquiries and forward all the information that is obtainable on that subject.³

Later events proved that Governor Douglas rightly was worried about the Kootenay trade going to the Oregon traders.

Apparently acting upon the reports of gold found on the upper Columbia, a party of miners led by Hamilton McKenzie went up the Columbia River in October, 1861.⁴ McKenzie's group went back to Rock Creek for more supplies, but in November returned to the Columbia. In May, 1862, a member of McKenzie's party, W. Cameron, brought to Gold Commissioner Cox at Osoyoos Lake two letters from members of McKenzie's group, H.N. Prouty and B.H. Hamilton. Cox forwarded the letters to W.A.G. Young, the Colonial Secretary.⁵ Hamilton said that he and his friends had wintered on the Columbia about 250 miles north of Colville.⁶ The winter had been very severe, and the spring unexpectedly late in coming. The ice was still on the river in April, but Hamilton expected that his men would be able to ascend the Columbia in approximately ten days. As yet the party had been unable to prospect, and thus could make no remarks about the presence of gold. The group had just returned from a trip to Death Rapids, but was unable to do any digging because of ice and snow. The men were running short

3 Douglas, James, to W.G. Cox, December 9, 1861.

4 Cox, W.G., to W.A.G. Young, May 20, 1862.

5 Loc. cit.

6 Hamilton, B.H., to W.G. Cox, April 19, 1862.

of provisions after the unexpectedly long winter. Hamilton concluded his letter by offering to prospect the region between the Columbia River and the Cariboo, if the government would furnish him with provisions.

Prouty's letter was written from Colville, where Prouty had just arrived from the upper Columbia.⁷ Prouty said that the party had camped for the winter about fifteen miles above the Upper Arrow Lake. The group had had to portage over ice several times before it reached the campsite. The party was forced to return south because of exhausting its provisions, and, on the way south, had had to haul its boats over and through the ice on the lakes. Prouty said that Hamilton McKenzie and some others were determined to stay on the river in the hope that they would receive assistance before their supplies ran out. McKenzie was preparing to ascend the river to Boat Encampment, making portages, if necessary, over the ice.

The veil lifted briefly to reveal miners on the upper Columbia in 1861 and 1862 and dropped again to hide the fate of the McKenzie party. For some time, however, small parties continued to explore the bars of the Columbia and its tributaries, but the Cariboo gold rush attracted most of the miners from Rock Creek and the Fraser River. Only a few men bothered to explore the creeks of the Big Bend. In 1864 Wild Horse

7 Prouty, H.N., to W.G. Cox, May 6, 1862.

Creek was on everyone's tongue, but the day of the Big Bend was near.

In October, 1864, Frederick Seymour, the Governor of the Crown Colony of British Columbia, sent a party under George Turner to the Columbia River to find a wagon route to Kootenay. Turner's men prospected the bars of the Columbia, and gained small amounts of gold. Turner observed a considerable number of men on the Columbia, and reported that some of these miners, particularly a group of Frenchmen, were doing well.⁸ In November and December, 1864, rumours of these discoveries were heard at Wild Horse Creek, and some of the miners there started for the Big Bend.⁹ Cold weather intervened, and drove back most of these men. The placers of the Big Bend were now known, however, and the big rush was about to begin.

In January, 1865, William Downie, an experienced prospector, wrote A.N. Birch, the Colonial Secretary for the Crown Colony of British Columbia, to tell the latter that he, Downie, intended to lead a party of unlucky ex-Cariboo miners

⁸ Details of the Turner expedition are to be found in: Victoria Colonist, January 6, 1865; New Westminster British Columbian, November 16 and 19, 1864, and January 4, 1865; and British Columbia, Department of Lands and Works, Columbia River exploration, 1865, New Westminster, Government Printing Office, 1866.

⁹ Young, W.C., to J.C. Haynes, January 10, 1865.

up the Columbia River to explore for gold.¹⁰ Downie was convinced that there were extensive gold deposits in the waters of the Columbia and its tributaries. In April, 1865, therefore, Downie set out by boat from Marcus, Washington Territory, for the Big Bend.¹¹ Among his companions were H.C. Carnes, Nelson Demars, Louis Lee, Steve Liberty and Sheppard Bailey. The party ascended the Columbia to Carnes Creek, the miners prospecting as they went, and at Carnes Creek found gold in paying quantities. Some of the party returned to Marcus for more supplies, while others whip-sawed lumber and put in sluice boxes. Still others pushed on up the Columbia, investigating Goldstream and its tributaries, French and McCulloch creeks. The miners did well on the various creeks and remained on them until late in October, 1865, before returning south.

10 Downie, William, to A.N. Birch, January 17, 1865. Downie seems to have been a born explorer. Born in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1819, he became a deep-sea sailor, and then a Great Lakes sailor. He took part in the California gold rush, explored extensively thereafter in the Queen Charlotte Islands, the Cariboo, the Kootenays, the central coast and the Stikine River area in British Columbia, as well as in Alaska and Panama. He was a true explorer, rather than a prospector. He died on his way to California from Victoria in December, 1893. Downie Creek is named after him. For further details, see his own work: Hunting for gold, San Francisco, California Publishing Company, 1893; and Victoria Colonist, December 29, 1893.

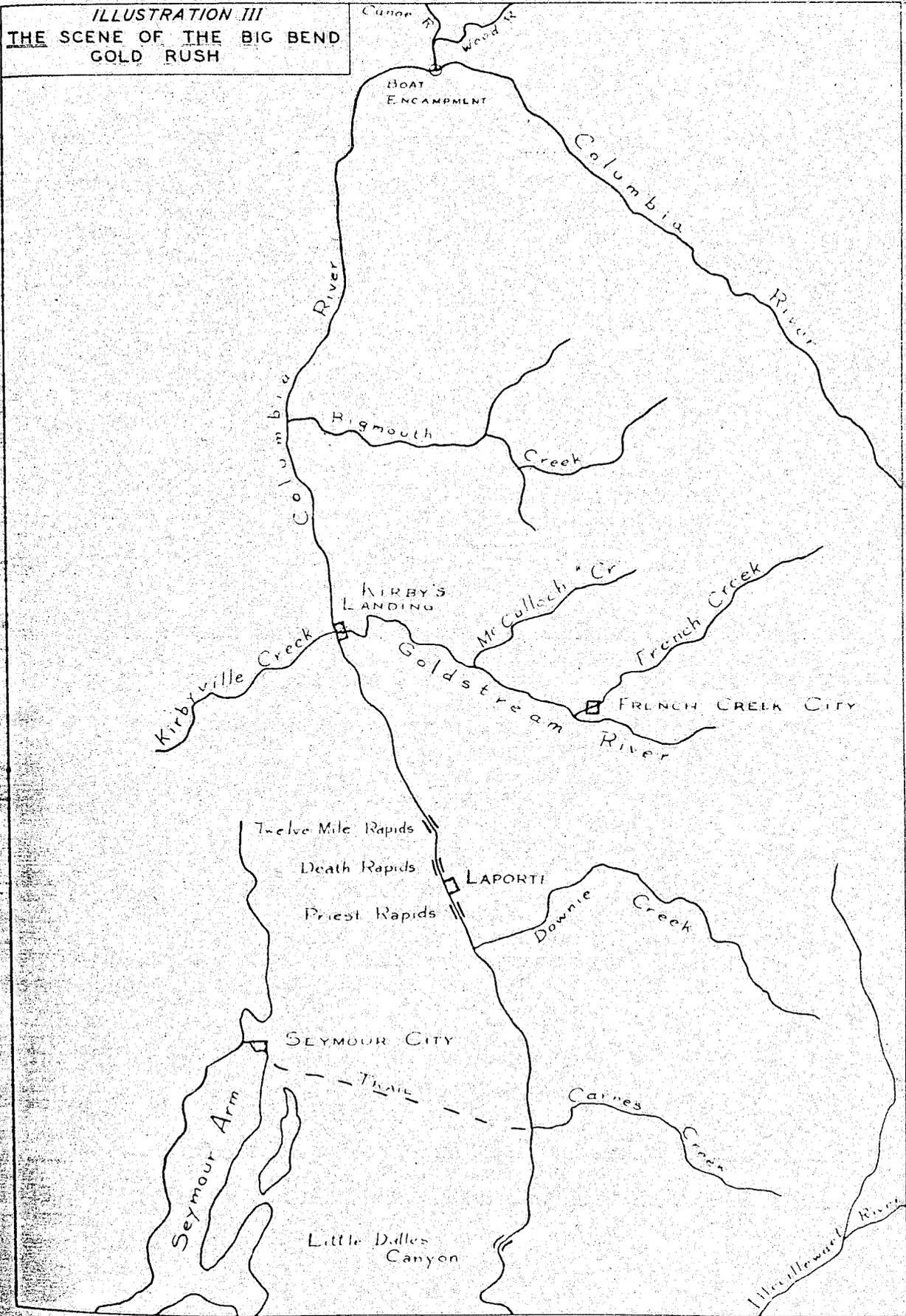
11 The amount of information on the Downie expedition of 1865 is large and confusing. The most straight-forward account is that in: British Columbia, Department of Mines, Annual report of the Minister of Mines, 1905 (hereafter referred to as B.C., Mines, Annual report), Victoria, King's Printer, 1906, p. J149. For other versions, see: Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, November 8, December 6, 1901; Kamloops Sentinel, December 26, 1930.

The news of the success of Downie's party spread rapidly. The Victoria Colonist announced that the discoveries in the Big Bend were "...the most cheering of any intelligence yet received in the colony, not even excepting the announcement of the discovery of Cariboo."¹² The cry of "shallow diggings" travelled over the Pacific North West, and attracted the attention of miners in the Cariboo, around Wild Horse, in Idaho, Montana and Washington. In 1866 the flood came. Between 8,000 and 10,000 miners flocked to the creeks and valleys of the Big Bend of the Columbia River, and began their frantic scrambling for gold. In 1866 both the S.S. Forty-Nine, on the Columbia, and the S.S. Marten, on Shuswap Lake, began bearing the miners to the Big Bend. The Forty-Nine steamed to La Porte, at the foot of Death Rapids. The Marten travelled between Savona and the town of Seymour, on Seymour Arm at the head of Shuswap Lake. Seymour City's existence was short, the same length of time as the gold rush. On French Creek, Walter Moberly laid out the townsite for French Creek City in June, 1866. On Goldstream arose another settlement, Kirbyville. Around French Creek, McCulloch Creek, Kirbyville and Wilson's Landing the mining settlements mushroomed into sizeable towns, with cabins, hotels, stores, saloons, blacksmith shops, laundries, billiard halls and barber shops. For the span of one year, the Big Bend was a busy and populous region.

The miners tried almost all the creeks in the area. From the first-discovered creek, Carnes, they moved on to Downie Creek, then to Goldstream, with its tributaries, French and McCulloch

¹² Victoria Colonist, December 4, 1865.

ILLUSTRATION III
THE SCENE OF THE BIG BEND
GOLD RUSH



creeks, and to Smith Creek, also known as Gaffney or Kirbyville, which flows into the Columbia from the west, opposite Goldstream. One writer well captured the picture of the miners in their wanderings, first panning for the tell-tale colours, and then clearing the ground, building cabins or pitching tents, and making sluice boxes:

...the real attack began with pick, shovel, and barrow, tearing the valley to pieces, washing down the mud into the river, ...elbowing the creek out of its bed and carrying it miles in ditches and flumes so that the hoards hidden in the lowest points might be ransacked.

A town sprang up in a month where no one but an Indian hunter had ever appeared before, and for a season or two everything throbbed with fierce life - miners and their parasites, the whisky-sellers and gamblers...all plying their trades, some growing rich, others going dead broke. Then, almost suddenly, the placer was worked out. The hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars' worth of gold, sorted and sifted, and hidden by the creek during geological ages, had been looted and carried off, and the town was deserted. For a year or two more a few Chinamen, warned off while the diggings were rich, made wages from lower-grade gravels; and then fire destroyed the cabins, and the valley sank back into wilderness again, and berry-bushes and saplings began to hide the old sluices and rock dumps, though here and there black water reflected the sky at the bottom of the shaft, or crumbling timbers stood at the gaping mouth of a tunnel. The creek had slipped back into its old channel, and furtively began again its work of sifting and sorting and hoarding. The bad dream ...was over, and peace... had come back to the valley.¹³

The miners quickly exhausted the shallow diggings, and moved on to other locations. They knew that there was

¹³ Coleman, A.P., The Canadian Rockies, new and old trails, Toronto, Frowde, 1911, p. 78.

more gold on the bedrock, but, because of the enormous amount of water on the different creeks, the many boulders, and the resulting expense of extracting the gold, they had to abandon their efforts to reach the deep diggings.¹⁴ By the end of 1866 the rush to the Big Bend was over. The excitement subsided, and the crowd left the district, leaving behind only a few men whose tenacity and perseverance kept them in the Big Bend for many years afterwards.

In 1869 H.M. Ball, in his annual report on the mining activities in the Kootenay area, revealed how the fortunes of the Big Bend had fallen. He reported that there were only thirty or forty miners on French Creek, and no miners at all on any of the other creeks.¹⁵ Ball believed that there was still much gold in the region, but stated that the miners were mostly poverty-stricken, and could not properly develop their claims. In 1871, A.W. Vowell, the Chief Constable at French Creek, reported that only seven claims, employing thirty men, were being worked.¹⁶ He added that the S.S. Forty-Nine, after struggling up the rapids of the Columbia with 15,000 pounds of freight, took 9,000 pounds of the same cargo back down the

14 B.C., Mines, Annual report, 1918, pp. K149-150.

15 Ball, H.M., to W.A.G. Young, December 28, 1869.

16 Vowell, A.W., to A.T. Bushby, June 8, 1871.

river, for lack of customers. Vowell also reported the importing of Chinese to the area. Between 1871 and 1885 mining activity in the Big Bend slowed almost to a stop. A few patient Chinese, here and there a white man, scratched the surface of the region.

There is no official record of how much gold was taken from the Big Bend in 1865 and 1866. The Report of the Minister of Mines for 1905, however, estimates that the miners gleaned \$3,000,000 in the two years.¹⁷ The Big Bend gold rush has been assessed as insignificant in comparison with the discoveries on the bars of the Fraser, on the creeks of the Cariboo, and in the southern Kootenays.¹⁸ The end of the Big Bend gold rush probably marked the end of the initial period of mining in British Columbia. The Big Bend was not a poor man's country. The shallow diggings quickly petered out, and the costs of transportation of men and supplies, the expenses of importing valuable hydraulic and quartz-mining equipment, and the lack of good roads proved too much for the individual miners.

With the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885, mining around Revelstoke recommenced. At La Porte, the gateway to the gold fields, in 1885, there were three ruined log houses, one tent and one man in charge of the supplies of a party of miners.¹⁹ Between 1886 and 1900, however, miners worked several creeks in the area, including Carnes, French, McCulloch,

17 B.C., Mines, Annual report, 1905, p. J149.

18 Trimble, W.J., The mining advance into the inland empire, Madison, Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin Press, 1914. (Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin History Series, vol. 3, no. 2), pp. 59-6

19 Coleman, op. cit., p. 67.

Gaffney (Smith) and Goldstream, and the Columbia River itself, and had fair success.

In 1888, Carnes Creek was the centre of considerable activity, but heavy snows destroyed the operations and forced the discontinuance of the work.²⁰ In 1890, nevertheless, there were enough miners in the Revelstoke region to warrant the formation of a miners' association for the purpose of scrutinizing any provincial legislation which adversely affected the mining industry.²¹ The association, however, was ineffectual and apathetic, and accomplished little. In the 1890's there was a brief period of activity on McCulloch Creek because of the reputedly rich "finds" on the property of the Orphan Boy Gold Mining Company in the Ground Hog Basin, but the dubious activities of the secretary-treasurer of the company led to the collapse of the organization, and a series of law-suits.²²

The difficulties of transportation were almost as great in 1896 as in 1866. From 1886 to 1897 pack trains, rather than steamers, were the sole means of supplying the miners. In August, 1897, the S.S. Lytton took twenty tons of hydraulic

20 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, May 26, 1894.

21 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, August 23, 1890.

22 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, October 3, 1896, March 6, 1897.

machinery to the Big Bend as part of the development programme of the French Creek Hydraulic Company, but in 1898 the company ceased operations. In 1896 serious prospecting for quartz commenced, but, unfortunately, had barely begun when the wave of mining development then sweeping British Columbia transferred to the Yukon.²³ Since 1900 there has been little mining development on the Columbia or its tributaries north of Revelstoke.

Of all the creeks in the Big Bend, French Creek has been the most profitable, yielding over 5,400 ounces of placer gold since 1885.²⁴ The Columbia River itself has produced almost six hundred ounces, Camp Creek, a recent producer, about four hundred ounces, and McCulloch Creek almost three hundred ounces. Other smaller producers since 1886 have been Carnes Creek, Fernie Creek, Gaffney Creek, Hall Creek and Goldstream. To these figures of placer output, however, must be added gold valued at \$3,000,000 produced during the 1865-1866 period. The production records of the Revelstoke Mining Division are poor, and give no details of placer gold production other than those of the various Gold Commissioners' estimates of the total production of the district.²⁵

In the late 1880's mining interest in the Revelstoke

23 B.C., Mines, Annual report, 1905, p. J149.

24 The production figures of the Revelstoke Mining Division are to be found in: British Columbia, Department of Mines, Placer gold production of British Columbia, Victoria, King's Printer, 1950, pp. 52-54. (Bulletin Series, no. 28, 1950.)

25 Loc. cit.

area shifted from the Big Bend to the valley of the Illecillewaet. In July, 1887, the first ore ever shipped to a smelter from a mine in British Columbia left the Lanark mine near Laurie station on the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway.²⁶

The Lanark mine was situated about three miles east of Illecillewaet station, and almost thirty miles east of Revelstoke. The mine produced silver-lead ores for some time, and then, petering out, was closed, and the concentrator and machinery were sold.

The mines of the Kootenays south of Revelstoke boomed in the 1890's, and discoveries at Toad Mountain, Ainsworth, Hendryx and other places led mining men to recognize the need for a smelter in British Columbia.²⁷ Since a smelter had to be centrally located in a mining district, easily accessible for all shippers of ore, Revelstoke, on a key site because of its status as a major rail and water transportation centre, seemed a logical place for the location of such a project. It was not surprising, therefore, that a company known as the Kootenay Smelting and Trading Syndicate, Limited, with a capitalization of \$200,000, was incorporated in February, 1889, with powers to erect smelters at Revelstoke, Golden or other points in the Kootenay area.²⁸ In July, 1890, the company

²⁶ Cottingham, M.E., A history of the West Kootenay district in British Columbia, M.A. thesis, U.B.C., April, 1947, p. 141.

²⁷ Canada, Department of Mines, Geological Survey of Canada, Report, 1888-1889, Montreal, W.F. Brown, 1890, pp. 11A, 104S-106S.

²⁸ Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

secured letters patent to a Crown Grant of 320 acres of land at Revelstoke from the federal government.²⁹ The firm constructed a plant to reduce and smelt low-grade silver, lead, copper and gold ores. Lionel R.C. Boyle was the president of the new company, and Dr. John Campbell was the local manager at Revelstoke. When President Boyle inspected the smelter in June, 1890, he found the plant ready for operation.³⁰ The smelter could handle fifty tons of ore per day, and the sampling works could accommodate one hundred tons daily.

In January, 1890, the Revelstoke Mining Company, a subsidiary of the Kootenay Smelting and Trading Syndicate, came into being to secure ores for the smelter through the purchase and operation of mining properties.³¹ Boyle and Campbell headed both firms as president and local manager, respectively. F. Roeser filled the posts of chemist and assayer. In July, 1890, the smelter company announced that it was prepared to receive and purchase gold, silver and lead ore, and that it would furnish every facility to miners to enable them to ship their ores.³² Roeser began visiting the various mining camps to arrange for the sending of ores to the smelter at Revelstoke. Unfortunately, several factors handicapped the smelter project from its beginning.

29 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, July 26, 1890.

30 Ibid., October 11, 1890.

31 Ibid., August 2, 1890.

32 Ibid., July 14, 1890.

When the federal government issued a Crown Grant of 320 acres of land in the railway belt to the smelter company, it did so in good faith, believing that it possessed a clear title to the land in question. The 320 acres, however, fell within the provincial Crown Grant to A.S. Farwell, a grant which for many years held back Revelstoke's development. The smelter company, consequently, did not care to develop its smelter and site until it was sure of its ownership of the property. In addition, there was a shortage of ore for the smelter to handle. The plant was ready for full operation in the spring of 1890. Some ores from mines at Illecillewaet, Field, East Kootenay, Kootenay Lake and Cherry Creek had arrived late in 1890.³³ The company had built wharf facilities, a tramway from the river to the works, a railway connection with the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, a sampling works and a brick yard. Still it was not operating because there was not enough ore to make operations pay. Finally, on July 22, 1891, the smelter fires were started, and on July 23 the first bullion from a smelter in British Columbia was drawn at the Kootenay Smelting and Trading Syndicate's plant.³⁴ A month later the smelter had exhausted its supply of ore, and was forced to suspend operations.³⁵ The lack of ore, the

33 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, January 3, 1891.

34 Ibid., July 25, 1891.

35 Ibid., August 22, 1891.

inadequacy of the network of railways between Revelstoke and the southern and eastern Kootenays, where the ores were, and the uncertainty of the land's title had proved too much for the company.

In the winter of 1891-1892 the snowfalls were unexpectedly heavy. The smelter site, on the eastern bank of the Columbia just below Revelstoke, began literally to melt away.³⁶ A further problem, river bank protection, had arisen for the company. Between 1892 and 1898 the shortage of ores, the river bank question, and the land's-title dispute continued to prevent the operation of the smelter. The people of Revelstoke railed against the apparent irresponsibility and inefficiency of the smelter company.³⁷ The company refused to operate its smelter, or to pay taxes unless it had a clear title to its site.³⁸ The provincial and federal governments were caught up in the legal tangles of the case of Farwell versus the Queen. The Columbia River, the silent onlooker of the muddle, finally settled the matter by eating away at the site of the smelter until, on September 3, 1898, the smelter building collapsed into the river, thus ending Revelstoke's hopes of becoming a smelting centre.³⁹

36 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, January 9, March 5, 1892.

37 Ibid., August 27, 1892.

38 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, June 2, October 27, 1894.

39 Ibid., September 3, 1898.

Since 1861 the creeks of the Big Bend have attracted many prospectors, capitalists and mining promoters, but they have not been among the major producers of gold in British Columbia. From 1885 to 1915 the people of Revelstoke had high hopes for the mines of the area, but, thereafter, they appreciated the fact that Revelstoke was to be a railway and lumber, rather than a mining, centre. There are still prospectors and miners in the Big Bend, however, who confidently look forward to the return of the days of '66.

Chapter Four

Water and road links

I

One of the most romantic and colourful aspects of Revelstoke's development - an aspect which has long been only a memory - was the era of the river boats on the Columbia River and the Arrow Lakes. When the rush to the Big Bend began in 1865, there were several ways by which the miners could reach the diggings. At first, all travel to the Big Bend was done by a combination of foot-slogging and water-travel, and the journey was a long, wearying affair. In 1866, however, two steamers began operating, one on the Columbia River and the other on Shuswap Lake, and eliminated much of the drudgery and hardship of the route to the diggings.

The first steamer to operate on the upper Columbia River north of the forty-ninth parallel was a sternwheeler, the S.S. Forty-Nine. Built at Little Dalles, Washington Territory, and equipped with the engines of the old Jennie Clark - the first sternwheeler built in the Pacific Northwest - the Forty-Nine was launched on November 18, 1865, by the captain and owner, Leonard White.¹ Captain White's own description of the journey gives a clear picture of the voyage of the first steamer to venture up the Columbia past the future site of Revelstoke to La Porte.² Leaving Little Dalles on April 15,

¹ Victoria Colonist, December 13, 1865.

² Ibid., May 23, 1866.

1866, the Forty-Nine had on board seventy-three impatient passengers and fifteen tons of light freight. The next day the vessel passed through the Customs House at Fort Sheppard, and breasted its first real test, the Kootenay Rapids. The ship then passed through the Lower Arrow Lake, encountering some ice. When the Forty-Nine entered the Upper Arrow Lake on April 18, the ice was thick enough to force Captain White to construct a false stem for the steamer, and to nail boards on the bow to act as an ice-breaker. After steaming through five or six miles of broken ice, the vessel again reached clear water, and passed from the Upper Arrow Lake to the Columbia, tying up to the bank fifteen miles north of the lake. On April 19, the ship several times encountered spots in the river completely covered by ice, but had no real difficulty. The Forty-Nine steamed past Carnes Creek on April 22, reached Kirbyville on the following day, and arrived at the foot of Death Rapids on April 24. Captain White selected a good landing place on the east side of the river, and on April 25 the boat discharged its cargo at this site, La Porte, the "gateway" to the mines on French Creek. On April 26, the Forty-Nine set out on her return voyage, and reached Colville two days later.

The crew of the Forty-Nine reported seeing about two hundred men in the area, almost all of whom had crossed the divide between Lake Shuswap and the Columbia.³ These men found snow twenty feet deep in places, and had either to pack

3 Victoria Colonist, May 23, 1866.

in their own supplies, or to pay Indians to pack at the rate of thirty cents per pound.

The Forty-Nine made only four trips in 1866. On what proved to be her last trip for the year, she hit a floating tree near Little Dalles on July 16, and was laid up at Colville for the rest of the mining season.⁴ In 1867 there was not enough activity in the Big Bend to warrant much use of the Forty-Nine, but on November 4, 1867, the ship made her last trip south for the year, carrying out ninety of the remaining miners and thus closing the boom days of the Big Bend gold rush.⁵

The Forty-Nine did not end her career in 1867. In 1868 she returned to the Big Bend to service the fifty or sixty miners remaining in the area, but, because of a lack of freight and passengers, made only one trip during the year.⁶ In October, 1869, she struck a rock near Steamboat Riffle, and after travelling downstream another four miles, sank in shallow water.⁷ The useful work of the Forty-Nine, however, was not yet finished. In 1870 the vessel was raised and taken to Colville for repairs.⁸ There her owners found that she had

4 Victoria Colonist, July 27, 1866.

5 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, August 7, 1897.

6 Victoria Colonist, June 20, 1868.

7 Ibid., October 27, 1869.

8 Ibid., July 2, 1871.

little wrong with her, and they planned to send her back to the Big Bend. In the summer of 1871 the Forty-Nine made her last appearance at La Porte, carrying up supplies to the Big Eddy for the men carrying out surveys for the Canadian Pacific Railway.

The Forty-Nine was not the only vessel to carry miners to the Big Bend area at the height of the gold rush of 1865-1866. In December, 1865, Captain William Irving negotiated an agreement with the government of the Crown Colony of British Columbia to place a steamer in operation between Savona, on Kamloops Lake, and Seymour, on Shuswap Lake, and to carry the mails for the government.⁹ The Hudson's Bay Company acquired Irving's contract, and in March, 1866, began building the S.S. Marten at Savona's Ferry.¹⁰ Captain Hamilton Moffatt, an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company, was in charge of the construction of the Marten, and commanded her on her first journey. The vessel was launched in May, and on the afternoon of May 26 left Savona's Ferry on her first voyage, arriving at Kamloops about three hours later and remaining there overnight.¹¹ She reached Seymour City (also known as Ogdenville) on the evening of May 27. Over five hundred people at Seymour welcomed

9 Victoria Colonist, December 25, 1865.

10 Ibid., March 2, 1866.

11 Ibid., June 4, 1866.

the long-awaited steamer.¹² During the summer of 1866 the Marten, carrying freight and passengers, made regular voyages between Savona and Seymour, a distance by water of 111 miles. From Seymour the miners and pack trains climbed the divide of the Gold Range to the Columbia River, and thence travelled to the mining creeks. Although the Marten was operated in opposition to the Forty-Nine, she could not carry the amount of freight and passengers of her competitor. Nevertheless, the vessel gave good service to the miners bound for the Big Bend. By the end of the summer of 1866, the gold rush was over. The Hudson's Bay Company tied up the Marten near Cherry Creek on Kamloops Lake, and left her there.¹³ In January, 1869, the Marten was stripped of most of her movable articles by thieves.¹⁴ Apparently, the vessel was never used again. The Hudson's Bay Company planned to refit her for use on the Fraser River, but abandoned the plan.¹⁵

From the time of the laying up of the S.S. Forty-Nine and the S.S. Marten until 1885, no steamer whistles blew their message on the upper Columbia River. In April, 1885, however, Pacquet Brothers began building the S.S. Kootenai

12 Victoria Colonist, June 4, 1866.

13 Ibid., January 11, 1869.

14 Loc. cit.

15 Ibid., June 7, 1869.

at Little Dalles for the firm of H.M. McCartney and Company to carry men and supplies to the site of the railway construction work in the Selkirk Range.¹⁶ On May 3, 1885, Captain A. T. Pingston, one-time member of the crew of the Forty-Nine, supervised the launching of the vessel, and after the installation of her paddle wheel, put her into service on the Columbia, taking freight and passengers to Second Crossing - Revelstoke.¹⁷ The Kootenai did valuable work during the summer of 1885, but in September, towards the end of her period of usefulness in railway construction, she ran on the rocks near Sheep Creek in American waters.¹⁸ She was refloated, and continued in service for the balance of the navigation season of 1885.¹⁹ She was then tied up at Little Dalles, and remained there for five years.

In 1888 J. Fred Hume, William Cowan and Robert Sanderson constructed a small, thirty-seven ton, catamaran-type paddle-wheeler, the S.S. Despatch, at Revelstoke. Operating under the name of the Columbia River Transportation Company, the three men launched the vessel in July, 1888.²⁰ Her trial run was not a success. She lacked the power to stem the rapids in the

16 Kamloops Inland Sentinel, April 2, 1885.

17 Victoria Colonist, May 6, September 15, 1885.

18 Ibid., September 15, 1885.

19 Ibid., October 6, 1885.

20 Donald Truth, July 28, 1888.

Columbia near Revelstoke, and literally had to be hauled through the same rapids. On August 8, 1888, however, the Despatch made a successful trip from Revelstoke to Sproat's Landing, and began her career as a steamship. She secured for her owners a portion of the trade of the Columbia and Kootenay rivers, a trade which then was almost completely dominated by Americans.

The Despatch had the Columbia River around Revelstoke to herself in 1888, but on June 15, 1889, she encountered her first rival when Captain F.P. Armstrong brought to Revelstoke the S.S. Marion, a ship which he had built in 1888 as a consort for the Duchess to ply on the waters of the Columbia around Golden.²¹ Because of her very light draught, the Marion was an ideal ship in times of low water. Captain Robert Sanderson eventually acquired the ownership of the Marion, and, after using her on the Columbia for some years, finally transferred her to Kootenay Lake in 1897.²²

The success of the Despatch and the Marion encouraged Cowan, Hume and Sanderson to enlarge their operations.²³ The two vessels were too small to handle the large amount of river traffic, and there were then no railway branch lines worthy of mention in the Kootenay region. The development of the mines

21 Donald Truth, June 30, 1888; Kamloops Inland Sentinel, June 15, 1889.

22 Vancouver Province, April 1, 1922.

23 William Cowan, one of the partners, fully described the formation of the Columbia and Kootenay Steam Navigation Company in the Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, May 30, 1896.

of the southern Kootenay area was so rapid, and the prospects of business with these mines so encouraging in 1889 that the three partners, lacking the money to enter the steamship field on any large scale, appealed to outsiders for the capital necessary to build the large steamer required. They interested J.A. Mara, F.S. Barnard and Captain John Irving in their scheme, and, with these three men, formed the Columbia and Kootenay Steam Navigation Company, with a capitalization of \$100,000. The new company immediately embarked on a programme of expansion. In December, 1889, Cowan, Sanderson and Hume laid the keel at Revelstoke for a new steamer, the 125 ton Lytton. The Lytton was launched in May, 1890, and on July 2, with Captain Frank Odin in charge, set out on her maiden voyage, steaming down the river to Sproat's Landing.²⁴ The company also purchased the S.S. Kootenai, which had been moored at Little Dalles since 1885, and put her into service in the same summer.²⁵ The two vessels, plus the Marion and the Despatch, gave good service in 1890. In 1891 the company added two ships to its fleet: the S.S. Columbia, built at Little Dalles and first commanded by Captain J.C. Gore, to travel from Little Dalles to Revelstoke;²⁶ and the S.S. Nelson, built at the town of Nelson and first commanded by Captain D.C. McMorris, to operate on Kootenay Lake.²⁷

²⁴ Revelstoke Kootenay Star, July 12, 1890.

²⁵ Ibid., July 5, 1890.

²⁶ Ibid., August 22, 1891.

²⁷ Ibid., August 8 and 15, 1891.

In 1891, also, J.A. Mara persuaded Captain James W. Troup, a prominent sea captain, river pilot and ship designer, to become the general manager of the steamship company.²⁸ Captain Troup was responsible for the construction and launching of a stern-wheeler, the S.S. Illecillewaet, at Revelstoke in October, 1892.²⁹ (After the old Despatch had been outmoded as a passenger vessel, she had been used as a snag boat. In 1892 her engines were transferred to the Illecillewaet, an odd ship built to serve in several capacities: as a motorized scow, as an ice-breaker, and as a ship for use in times of low water in the river.) Under Captain Troup's efficient direction, the company became a prosperous, well-managed concern, showing a satisfactory balance sheet every year.

Steaming on the Columbia River was not an easy or safe task. Tragedies involving the loss not only of ships but also of lives were common. In 1893 Captain C.W. Vanderburgh of Nanaimo built the Arrow, a small screw steamer, at Revelstoke, taking her on her trial trip on October 8, 1893.³⁰ He operated the forty-two ton vessel independently on the Arrow Lakes from October, 1893, to December, 1895, frequently being able to use her when the larger vessels were unable to navigate. In December,

28 Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

29 A good general account of steamboating on the Columbia and Kootenay rivers is to be found in: Kennedy, W.G., "Shallow draft," Cominco magazine, vol. 4 (January, 1943), pp. 3-7, 24-29.

30 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, July 1, October 14, 1893.

1895, however, she was found lying bottom up and partly submerged on the North East Arm of the Upper Arrow Lake.³¹ Captain Vanderburgh and his engineer, the only persons known to have been aboard the steamer at the time, were never seen again. Apparently a sudden storm near Bannock Point had capsized the vessel. She was eventually righted and taken to Slocan Lake where she was subsequently used for several years.³²

From 1890 to 1894 the Columbia and Kootenay Steam Navigation Company prospered, suffering few accidents, and increasing its fleet considerably, not only on the Columbia River, but also on Kootenay Lake. A series of mishaps, beginning in 1894, however, forced the company to carry out an expensive programme of rebuilding. On August 2, 1894, fire destroyed the S.S. Columbia on the Columbia River near the international boundary.³³

On March 17, 1895, the company lost the S.S. Spokane at Kaslo.³⁴

On December 3, 1895, the S.S. Kootenai hit a snag at Cottonwood Island, and sank.³⁵ Although she was refloated and taken to Nakusp for repairs, she was no longer serviceable. The company began replacing its losses by building the S.S. Nakusp in 1895

31 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, December 21, 1895.

32 Kennedy, Cominco magazine, vol. 4 (January, 1943), passim.

33 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, August 4, 1894.

34 Fitzsimmons, James, "Columbia River chronicles," British Columbia Historical Quarterly, vol. 1 (April, 1937), pp. 87-100.

35 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, December 7, 1895.

and the S.S. Trail in 1896.³⁶ The day of the originators of the Columbia and Kootenay Steam Navigation Company, however, was almost over.

In the 1890's the Canadian Pacific Railway Company found itself fighting a battle with American interests for the control of the trade routes and transportation lines to the rich mineral wealth of the Kootenays. The Canadian company had built several separated lines of railway, but found that the connecting services between its branches were in the hands of other groups, and were, therefore, beyond the control of the railway company. Accordingly, the Canadian Pacific set out to secure control of these companies. One of these independent firms was the Columbia and Kootenay Steam Navigation Company. In December, 1896, J.A. Mara, on behalf of the steamship firm, conferred with representatives of the Canadian Pacific, and arranged for the transfer of all the holdings of the steamship company - including seven steamers, ten barges, the docks and other facilities - to the Canadian Pacific.³⁷ The railway company immediately began to increase its fleet, facilities and services on the Columbia and Kootenay rivers and Kootenay Lake. As part of this programme, the company assembled the S.S. Moyie and the S.S. Minto at Nakusp in 1898, and put them into service. Of them more will be said later.

36 Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

37 Canadian Pacific Railway, Annual report for the fiscal year 1896, Montreal, n.p., 1897, pp. 9-10.

The people of Revelstoke had long desired a steamer service to the mines of the Big Bend. The S.S. Forty-Nine had steamed as far as La Porte in the 1860's, but from the time of the last trip of the Forty-Nine until 1897, no steamer had gone up the Columbia past the Big Eddy. As early as 1890 the Kootenay Star had been advocating a steamship service to the Big Bend.³⁸ The Kootenay Mail, the miners of the Big Bend, and the merchants of Revelstoke took up the cry, but without success. In April, 1895, the Federal Department of Public Works sent out a party under F.C. Gamble to investigate the possibilities of navigation on the Columbia River above Revelstoke. Gamble reported that, although there were dangerous sections in the river - particularly in Death Rapids Canyon and in the river immediately above Revelstoke - a powerful steamer could navigate the river.³⁹ Since the S.S. Forty-Nine had steamed to La Porte in 1866, why, he asked, could not other steamers? Gamble also stated, however, that he would not recommend for the first year a larger expenditure than \$2,000, and that to be expended only upon the condition that a steamer of sufficient power to cope with the current be provided for traffic to the Big Bend. Not until August, 1897, did anybody send another steamer up the Columbia past Revelstoke.

In May, 1897, Captain J.W. Troup considered, but rejected, a plan for the S.S. Illecillewaet to go to La Porte.⁴⁰ On

38 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, September 27, 1890.

39 Gamble's report is reproduced almost verbatim in: Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, February 8 and 15, 1896.

40 Ibid., May 15, 1897.

August 5, 1897, however, Captain Troup and Captain Albert Forslund took the S.S. Lytton from Revelstoke to the Big Bend, carrying twenty tons of mining supplies for the French Creek Hydraulic Company.⁴¹ The Lytton made four such trips in 1897, but thereafter the river above Revelstoke waited four more years before it again bore a steamer.

The Kootenay Mail, the Herald, the Board of Trade and other organizations in Revelstoke continued to agitate for a steamer. In April, 1901, some citizens of Revelstoke, including F. McCarty, G.S. McCarter, T.E.L. Taylor, Dan Robinson and J.D. Molson formed the Revelstoke Navigation Company to build and operate a steamer on the Columbia River above Revelstoke.⁴² The Canadian Pacific Railway Company offered the use of its shipyard, Captain Troup provided the plans, and David Bulger, a master shipbuilder, directed the construction of the ship at Nakusp.⁴³ In addition, the provincial government and the city of Revelstoke both contributed financial bonuses to the new shipping firm.⁴⁴ On January 8, 1902, the whistles of the steamers Rosslund, Minto and Kootenay welcomed their new sister, the S.S. Revelstoke, as she slid down the ways into the water for the first time. Commenting upon the launching of the Revelstoke, the Kootenay Mail said:

41 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, August 7, 1897.

42 Ibid., April 26, 1901.

43 Ibid., January 10, 1902.

44 Loc. cit.

The gentlemen who have taken up this steamship project and carried it through are examples of public spirited enterprise such as would be a credit to any city in the Dominion.⁴⁵

On the morning of June 7, 1902, the S.S. Revelstoke arrived in Revelstoke from Nakusp, and the same evening, commanded by Captains Albert Forslund and J.C. Gore, left for La Porte.⁴⁶ At long last the Big Bend had its own steamer.

The Revelstoke Navigation Company operated the vessel twice weekly during the months of high water to the head of navigation on the Columbia River, and usually moored her at Comaplix during the winter months. The company also purchased Boyd's Ranch, near the head of navigation, and used the fresh produce grown there to supply its steamer. The value of the vessel to the mines of the Big Bend was summarized by the Report of the Minister of Mines for 1902:

The (Revelstoke) Division has witnessed steady development during the past season, owing to the plying of the steamer "Revelstoke" on the Columbia river above Revelstoke. Miners and prospectors got their supplies in much more conveniently this season, and a great deal of new work will be done next year in consequence.⁴⁷

The Revelstoke navigated the dangerous waters of the Columbia above the city from June, 1902, until April, 1915. On April 4, 1915, while she was tied up at Comaplix, she was burned to the

45 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, January 10, 1902.

46 Loc. cit.

47 British Columbia, Department of Mines, Annual report of the Minister of Mines, 1902 (hereafter referred to as B.C. Mines, Annual report), Victoria, King's Printer, 1903, p. H139.

water's edge in the disastrous fire which completely destroyed the yards and mills of the Forest Products of British Columbia, Limited.⁴⁸ With the destruction of the S.S. Revelstoke, the days of steamer service to the Big Bend were over.

The era of steamers on the Columbia is virtually ended. The development of networks of railways throughout southeastern British Columbia, and the construction of highways to meet the advance of automobile traffic have almost eliminated the need for steamers on the Columbia. Until 1954, however, there was still one proud steamer link with the glorious past. In 1896 the parts for two stubby, sternwheel steamers, the S.S. Minto and the S.S. Moyie, were built in Toronto, and sent west for service on the Stikine River in northern British Columbia.⁴⁹ Before the steamers arrived in Vancouver, however, the gold rush to the Stikine collapsed, and, instead, the two vessels were diverted to the Columbia River, being assembled at the Canadian Pacific Railway Company's ways at Nakusp in 1898. The Minto was put into service on the Arrow Lakes, and the Moyie went to Kootenay Lake. For fifty-four years the Minto, a steel-hulled vessel of 830 tons, sailed the waters of the Arrow Lakes between Robson West and Arrowhead, and watched newer and more glamorous ships come and go. On April 24, 1954, she tied up at Nakusp for the last time.⁵⁰ To her, more than

⁴⁸ Revelstoke Mail-Herald, April 7, 1915.

⁴⁹ Details on the S.S. Minto and the S.S. Moyie are to be found in: Kennedy, Cominco magazine, vol. 4 (January, 1943), passim.

⁵⁰ Vancouver Sun, April 26, 1954.

to any other vessel in the history of steamboats on the Arrow Lakes and the Columbia River, belongs the title of "Lady of the Lakes." Only the Moyie, her sister ship travelling the waters of Kootenay Lake, can match her record of service.

II

River boats provided a partial solution to the problem of transportation in the Big Bend, but they had to be supplemented by land communications. The building of roads in the Revelstoke-Big Bend area has been an arduous and expensive process. The region has always felt the lack of good trails and main arteries. At the peak of the rush to the Big Bend in 1865 Walter Moberly, on behalf of the Government of the Crown Colony of British Columbia, directed the construction of a wagon road, thirty-five miles in length, from Seymour, at the head of Shuswap Lake, to the western bank of the Columbia River at a point opposite Carnes Creek.⁵¹ After the miners had travelled 175 miles from Victoria to Yale by steamer, and had ridden another 130 miles by stage from Yale to Savona over a government wagon road, they went by boat from Savona to Seymour, another 110 miles, and then plodded over this pack trail on the last thirty-five miles of the overland journey to the Columbia.⁵² On various

⁵¹ British Columbia, Department of Lands and Works, Columbia River exploration, 1865, New Westminster, Government Printing Office, 1866, passim.

⁵² Victoria Colonist, April 17, 1866.

types of boats they then went to the diggings, another twenty miles up the river. In 1866 the coming of the S.S. Marten to Shuswap Lake and the S.S. Forty-Nine to the Columbia River considerably eased the hardships of the journey. The miners themselves, by foot-slogging, wore many trails between the various creeks. The government also built rough pack trails between the major diggings. One such trail connected Kirby's Landing with French Creek.⁵³ Relatively little, however, was done in the days of the Big Bend excitement to provide the region with an adequate system of roads and trails. When the miners had exhausted the shallow diggings of the easily-accessible creeks, they chose to leave the area rather than to struggle over the rough terrain to the more remote streams. The difficulties of travel to, from and through the Big Bend area contributed heavily to the rapid decline of the gold boom in 1866.

From 1866 to 1883 there was such a small population in the Big Bend that there was little reason for any road or trail-making in the region. Such trails as were in existence in 1866 were soon reclaimed by Nature. With the advance of the Canadian Pacific Railway to the Columbia River both from the east and the west in the 1880's, however, the provincial government recognized the need for a road from Shuswap Lake to the Columbia River to permit the passage of men and of construction supplies.

⁵³ British Columbia, Department of Lands and Works, Columbia River exploration, 1866, Victoria, Queen's Printer, (1869), passim.

In 1883 the government granted 60,000 acres of land to a group headed by Gustavus Blin Wright in exchange for the construction of a wagon road, twelve feet wide and forty-three miles long, from Shuswap Lake eastward via Griffin, Three Valley, Victor and Bluff lakes to the Columbia River at the Big Eddy.⁵⁴

Wright's construction crews began work immediately, and had the road ready for use on October 1, 1884.⁵⁵ The contractors utilized the terrain of the valley of the Eagle River by building sections of road only between the waterways, and by providing ferries on each of the four lakes. Along this route, the Eagle Pass Wagon Road, moved great amounts of construction supplies and large numbers of men in 1884 and 1885. Wright also operated a ferry from the Big Eddy to Revelstoke, then known as the Second Crossing of the Columbia River, and at Second Crossing opened the first store on the site of modern Revelstoke.⁵⁶ Along the road from Big Eddy, on the Columbia, to Eagle Pass Landing, on the eastern shore of Shuswap Lake, the British Columbia Express Company operated two stages a week in the spring and summer of 1885.⁵⁷ Eagle Pass Landing suddenly came into existence in 1883 as an important supply centre, and as rapidly became a ghost town in 1885 with the coming of the

54 British Columbia, Department of Lands and Works, Report of the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, 1883 (hereafter referred to as B.C., Lands and Works, Report), Victoria, Queen's Printer, 1884, pp. 522 ff.

55 B.C., Lands and Works, Report, 1884, p. 267.

56 Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

57 Victoria Colonist, June 19, 1885.

railway.⁵⁸ When the Eagle Pass Road had served its primary purpose - the conveying of supplies to the railway crews - it had fulfilled its destiny. The Canadian Pacific Railway followed the same route as the road through the valley of the Eagle River, and the construction crews blasted most of the road out of existence. Today there are few traces of the old "tote" road.⁵⁹

For many years after 1885 the only link with the area west of Revelstoke was the Canadian Pacific Railway. With the coming of the automobile, demands arose for a road from Revelstoke to the Okanagan Valley to provide car-owners with an adequate drive.⁶⁰ Not until 1922, however, was there an answer to the demands. On August 17, 1922, Premier John Oliver and the Honourable W.S. Sutherland, the newly-appointed Minister of Public Works for British Columbia, presided at the opening of the Revelstoke-Okanagan road at Malakwa.⁶¹ The completion of the highway gave the people of Revelstoke their first opportunity to take their automobiles outside the city.

Another road for which the people of Revelstoke waited for some years was the highway from Revelstoke to Arrowhead. One

⁵⁸ On November 5, 1885, a correspondent wrote from Eagle Pass: "Eagle Pass is a railway town of the past. Its growth was rapid; its decline much swifter. It is situated at the extreme head of Shuswap lake, north of the Eagle river and Shikamoose [sic] narrows." Victoria Colonist, November 5, 1885.

⁵⁹ The builder of the road, Gustavus Blin Wright, after a career as a cannery operator, ship-builder, ferry operator, road builder, merchant and mining magnate, died at Ainsworth in 1898. Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, April 16, 1898.

⁶⁰ For example, see the editorial in the Revelstoke Observer, February 19, 1909.

⁶¹ Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

of the major causes of the slowness in settlement of the area around the North East Arm of Upper Arrow Lake was the inaccessibility of the district. Steamers provided virtually the only means of entrance. The roads in existence prior to 1923 were not only poor, but, in many cases, unconnected. By 1923, however, the Department of Public Works for British Columbia had completed the Sutherland Highway between Arrowhead and Revelstoke.⁶² This road considerably lessened the isolation of the several communities in and around the Upper Arrow Lake region.

In 1927 the road which winds its way through Mount Revelstoke National Park to the top of Mount Revelstoke was completed. The new highway had been projected for a long time.⁶³ Originally, there had been a rough trail up the mountain to Miller and Eva lakes, near the summit. In 1912, shortly after the entire mountain was designated a national park, a start was made on the construction of a road up Mount Revelstoke. The work was slow, and the outbreak of war in 1914 curtailed the project. During the war inmates of an internment camp established on the mountain provided labour for the highway. Although Mount Revelstoke is only 6,700 feet in height, the proposed route twisted and turned for twenty miles before it reached the summit. Construction was difficult, therefore, and was not officially completed until August 17, 1927.

62 Revelstoke Review, November 28, 1923.

63 For details of the construction of the so-called "Royal Highway" see: Canada, Department of the Interior, Dominion Parks Branch, Through the heart of the Rockies and Selkirks, Ottawa, King's Printer, 1929, passim.

The road is known today as the "Royal Highway" because of the visits of several members of the Royal Family to Mount Revelstoke during the construction of the road. The Royal Highway is a favourite drive for both local residents and tourists because of the magnificent view from the summit of the road.

The road which has most interested the residents of the Revelstoke area is the one which leads to the Big Bend. Since 1890 the Big Bend Highway has been projected, supported and opposed, but never, for a moment, forgotten in the fifty-year interval before its completion. As early as 1891 the provincial government had finished a rough trail out of the wilderness of forest as far north of Revelstoke as Eight Mile Falls.⁶⁴ The miners in the Big Bend area, nevertheless, were still forced to push their way many miles beyond the falls before they reached their claims. Fortunately for the individual miners, several enterprising men, of whom the most renowned was George Laforme,⁶⁵ undertook to drive pack trains of supplies to the

64 Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

65 George Laforme left St. Hyacinthe, Quebec, in February, 1882, for the West, and in 1883 joined a survey party in Winnipeg. He then moved on to Medicine Hat for the winter of 1883, and in 1884 appeared in Holt City (Lake Louise) as a baker, supplying the railway workers from his log cabin bakery. In 1884, following the progress of the railway, he opened another bakery at Beavermouth. In May, 1885, he walked the line of railway from Beavermouth to Revelstoke, and there, at last, he found his home. In 1886 and 1887 he prospected around the Ground Hog Basin and Carnes Creek, and eventually bought land near Goldstream, erecting a cabin there. In 1889 he began operating pack trains to the Big Bend, and for the next sixteen years he and his strings of horses and mules were a familiar sight in Revelstoke. He also built the Goldstream Ferry at the mouth of

Big Bend, and, in self-interest, had to carve a rough trail out of the jungle of forest between Revelstoke and the Big Bend. These men maintained communications between Revelstoke and the Big Bend for many years. Local groups in Revelstoke, meanwhile, maintained a constant pressure on the provincial government for better overland links with the Big Bend. In January, 1894, for example, the Kootenay Star advocated the construction of a road to Steamboat Rapids, and the operation of a steamer from there to Downie Creek,⁶⁶ and in April the Kootenay Mail urged the immediate construction of a wagon road to the Big Bend, saying that there were over two hundred men unemployed in Revelstoke capable of starting work at once on the project, thus allowing the mines of the region to become paying properties instead of liabilities.⁶⁷ The provincial government, beset by numerous pleas for roads from all over British Columbia in a

McCulloch Creek, and operated it for his own pack trains and for other people, free of charge, for many years. He acquired warehouses, a blacksmith shop, corrals, and an increasingly large number of horses. In addition, he established another ranch on Downie Creek, and with his Goldstream ranch, was able to provide feed and water for his pack trains. When the S.S. Revelstoke began its career, it eliminated much of Laforme's business, but he continued to operate his pack trains until 1905. He then settled on his farm near Revelstoke, supplying produce to the local and prairie markets. He died on December 30, 1939, just six months before the completion of the highway along the route over which he and his pack trains had struggled for sixteen years. Revelstoke Review, January 5, 1940.

66 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, January 27, 1894.

67 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, April 14, 1894.

year of financial uncertainty, could only begin work on the improvement of the existing trail.

In 1896 J.D. Graham, the Gold Commissioner at Revelstoke, pointed out the need for the road:

I would beg to point out that lack of transportation facilities so far has acted as a detriment to the Big Bend country. This mining season opened very late, in fact the snow was on the mountains till July, then came the floods, that practically cut off all communications with the Bend for about 5 weeks by trail....It is but a question of a short time when it will be found that the north end of West Kootenay is equal, if not superior, to any part of it, but as before stated transportation facilities are wanted for the rapid opening up of this part of Kootenay.⁶⁸

On March 17, 1899, the Revelstoke Board of Trade entered the fight for a wagon road by passing a resolution urging the government to proceed immediately with the project.⁶⁹

The provincial government, however, still doubted the necessity or value of the road:

The waggon road now [1900] under construction by the Government may be of some temporary benefit to the District, but for the future development of this promising section a cheaper means of transportation than can be given by a waggon road 40 miles in length must be assured. The Columbia river, Nature's highway, is navigable from beyond the International Boundary to Laporte, Big Bend, a distance of some 250 miles, and will doubtless be found, in the future as in the past, the cheapest route in and out of the Big Bend portion of this Division.⁷⁰

68 B.C., Mines, Annual report, 1896, p. 537.

69 Vancouver Province, March 31, 1934.

70 B.C., Mines, Annual report, 1900, pp. 808-810.

Official doubts about the wagon road to the Big Bend caused slowness in the construction of the project. By 1928 the road had reached only to Carnes Creek, twenty-six miles north of Revelstoke.⁷¹ By 1928, however, the proposal of a Big Bend Highway had been incorporated into the building of the Trans-Canada Highway, a plan of national importance.⁷² The appearance of the automobile had brought a demand for access by motor car to the national parks of the Rockies and Selkirks. The project of a trans-mountain highway linking eastern Canada with the prairies and British Columbia was conceived, and in 1911 surveys were started for a highway from Calgary, via Banff National Park, to the Columbia Valley to connect with existing roads in British Columbia. The outbreak of war in 1914 delayed the actual construction of the road, but work was resumed in 1919, and in June, 1923, the Banff-Windermere Highway was officially opened. Only the Selkirks remained as a bar to the completion of the British Columbia section of the Trans-Canada Highway.

In 1928 the federal and provincial governments agreed to complete jointly a highway between Golden and Revelstoke. For some time there was a dispute among the people of Revelstoke and among the government engineers about the route which the road should take. One group favoured a highway following the Columbia River from Golden, via the Big Bend,

71 B.C., Mines, Annual report, 1928, p. C311.

72 For details of the construction of the Big Bend Highway see: Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

to Revelstoke. Another group wished the road to follow virtually the same route as the railway took through the Selkirk Range. Eventually, the surveyors decided that the route through the Selkirks would be too difficult and expensive: the heavy annual snowfall and inevitable snowslides would necessitate too much work for the maintenance crews; the season during which the highway would be clear would be too short; and the actual engineering difficulties would be too great. The Big Bend route, about 190 miles long, was adopted, and construction began in 1929 from both Revelstoke and Golden. In the spring of 1940 the highway was completed. The opening took place on June 29, 1940, at the site of Boat Encampment - David Thompson's headquarters almost 135 years before. Somewhat optimistically, the provincial government placed an advertisement in the Revelstoke Review:

The opening of the Big Bend Section of the Trans-Canada Highway sets the seal upon a Great Achievement, and consummates ten years of well-directed effort. It marks an event no less significant than the laying of the last length of steel which brought the railroad to British Columbia.

Since our earliest days, the Big Bend has remained inviolate, a stubborn barrier to uninterrupted Highway Travel. Enclosed in that great loop is an area of entrancing loveliness, a chaos of splendid peaks and high green glaciers, virgin territory which until now has been closed to all save the lonely prospector and the 'whitewater man.'⁷³

Unfortunately for the advocates of the Big Bend Highway, the factor of weather forces the closing of the road for at least four, and sometimes six, months of the year. For

73 Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

the remaining period, the road is a difficult one to keep in repair. Recently there has been some discussion among road-builders about the wisdom of re-locating the highway, either across the Selkirks or around the range's southern end. The cost of such a re-location, however, is almost prohibitive, and will probably deter such a move for some time to come.

III

Mail deliveries in Revelstoke today are a comparatively easy matter, but seventy years ago the lot of a postmaster or mail carrier in the Revelstoke or Big Bend regions was a far different story. In the days of railway construction, mail bound for Farwell from Victoria was taken slowly to Kamloops. From there the mail was carried irregularly by any responsible person happening to go to Farwell. On January 1, 1885, W. Church secured the contract to carry the mail from Kamloops to Eagle Pass Landing once a week,⁷⁴ and on January 15, A. McBryan was authorized to begin a fortnightly service between Shuswap Lake and Farwell.⁷⁵ Most of the mail bound for Victoria from Farwell, however, was taken to the end of steel of the Canadian Pacific Railway, then eastward to Winnipeg, back, via the Northern Pacific Railway, through the United States, and eventually to Victoria.⁷⁶ The process was

74 Canada, Post Office Department, Report of the Postmaster General for the year ending 30th June, 1885, (hereafter referred to as Canada, Post Office, Report), Ottawa, MacLean, Rogers, 1885, p. 144.

75 Loc. cit.

76 Victoria Colonist, July 22, 1885.

slow.

The first postman at Farwell, apparently, was one Hibbs, whose sole claim to fame lies in the fact that in June, 1885, he misused postal funds.⁷⁷ No mention of him appears again. In July, 1885, a post office of sorts opened in Farwell, but it handled only that mail received from the east.⁷⁸ The completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in November, 1885, ended Farwell's isolation, and led to the opening of a regular post office in Revelstoke in February, 1886, and the closing of the post office at Eagle Pass Landing in the following April.⁷⁹ T.A.W. Gordon became Revelstoke's first postmaster.⁸⁰ In July, 1886, A. McIntyre assumed the task of carrying mail twelve times weekly between the town of Farwell (by now referred to as Revelstoke) and the railway station, three-quarters of a mile away.⁸¹ McIntyre maintained his service until September 30, 1887, when he was succeeded by G. Dennstedt and E. Harrop.⁸² In 1889 T.A.W. Gordon sold his post office building to F.B. Wells, an ex-employee of the railway company, and Wells carried on the service until October 1, 1901.⁸³

77 Victoria Colonist, June 19, 1885.

78 Ibid., July 25, 1885.

79 Canada, Post Office, Report, 1887, pp. 178-179.

80 Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

81 Canada, Post Office, Report, 1887, p. 152.

82 Canada, Post Office, Report, 1888, p. 152.

83 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, October 4, 1901.

In the 1890's the work of the Revelstoke post office expanded greatly. In July, 1890, the mails for the lower Columbia River began travelling on the steamers thrice weekly to Sproat, although in the winter they still followed a circuitous route from Revelstoke, via Victoria, through Washington State to Marcus, and by trail up the Columbia to Sproat and Nelson, a fourteen-day journey.⁸⁴ In August, 1891, the settlement around the railway station at Revelstoke achieved a post office when H. Lewis, the assistant to Postmaster Wells, opened a second branch.⁸⁵ In 1901 the federal government appointed A. McRae to be postmaster in Revelstoke, and opened a new post office.⁸⁶

In the early 1890's, the miners in the Big Bend area depended on the good-will of the packers for their mail. Usually these packers provided the service without charge. On November 27, 1894, however, the first official mail carrier in the Big Bend since the days of the Hudson's Bay Company's express boats, left Revelstoke on foot for Goldstream with forty pounds of mail.⁸⁷ John Neilson, the mailman, had contracted with the federal government to carry mail once a month for five months to the Big Bend. The Kootenay Mail commented that the journey was "...an arduous and dangerous trip to be taken alone in the depths of winter, and Mr. Neilson

84 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, July 19, 1890, January 3, 1891.

85 Ibid., August 1, 1891.

86 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, September 6 and 20, October 4, 1901.

87 Ibid., December 1 and 22, 1894.

should be adequately paid for it!⁸⁸ Neilson received twenty dollars per trip. On his first delivery, he had to struggle through soft snow for ten days before he arrived at Goldstream on December 6, 1894. From Goldstream he visited French and then McCulloch creeks before returning to Revelstoke. When Neilson made his next visit to the Big Bend in January, 1895, he drove a team of dogs.⁸⁹

In the winter of 1895-1896 George Laforme succeeded Neilson as the official postman for the Big Bend, getting paid in the winter for what he did, free of charge, in the summer.⁹⁰ The journeys to the Big Bend were dangerous, but both Laforme and Neilson were experienced packers and woodsmen who could do their job well.

In 1914 Ole Westerburg took over the task of carrying the mails to the Big Bend, and from 1914 to 1940 made twenty scheduled deliveries a year. He was the only mail carrier in the area.⁹¹ The round trip was 150 miles over steep hills, across creeks and through heavy brush. Westerburg made the journey on foot, carrying an eighty-pound pack on his back. In blizzards, snowdrifts, sub-zero weather, spring thaws, summer heat and autumn chills, he carried the mail through the wilderness, at the end of his journey searching out the lonely trappers, prospectors and miners. The completion of the Big

88 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, December 1, 1894.

89 Ibid., January 5, 1895.

90 Ibid., December 7, 1895.

91 Vancouver Province, October 5, 1940.

Bend Highway and the coming of the automobile to make in a few hours the journey which took Westerborg days, ended the pioneer days of the mail service to the Big Bend. In October, 1940, Ole Westerborg retired after thirty-six years of gruelling work as the Big Bend's only mail carrier.

The isolation of the Big Bend has proven a barrier to the region's development. River boats intruded upon this isolation in the 1860's, briefly in the 1890's, and for the last time between 1902 and 1915. Poor land connections provided a barrier both in the 1860's and the 1950's. The Big Bend Highway has been only a partial answer to the problem of communications, a problem which has effectively barred the development of the natural resources of the area.

Chapter Five

The Canadian Pacific Railway - its construction and its influence on Revelstoke

After the union of the two Crown Colonies of British Columbia and Vancouver Island in 1866, there was a period of four years during which the united Colony made its choice as to its future political status.¹ During this period, various factors were influencing the colony's decision: there were groups ardently championing or opposing Confederation with Canada; other groups were vigorously proposing annexation of the colony by the United States; some colonists wished to retain British Columbia's status as an individual Crown Colony; and, probably most important of all, the British Government, weary of the expense and continual bother of the unprofitable colony, was apparently convinced of the logic of ridding itself of this troublesome and expensive burden. From the various pressures there gradually emerged a decision for union with Canada in exchange for two major conditions, responsible government and a trans-continental link with Canada. It was the latter condition that led to the birth of the town of Farwell, and to the growth of the city of Revelstoke to its present status. On May 16, 1871, the British Government issued an order-in-council declaring that from and after July 20, 1871,

1 For a full discussion of British Columbia's political affairs between 1866 and 1871 see: Sage, W.N., "British Columbia and Confederation," British Columbia Historical Quarterly, vol. 15 (January-April, 1951), pp. 71-84.

British Columbia should form part of the Dominion of Canada.²

In July, 1870, representatives of British Columbia and Canada had agreed to the Terms of Union between the two entities.

Clause Eleven of the Terms of Union stated:

The Government of the Dominion undertake to secure the commencement simultaneously, within two years from the date of the Union, of the construction of a Railway from the Pacific towards the Rocky Mountains, and from such point as may be selected, east of the Rocky Mountains, towards the Pacific, to connect the seaboard of British Columbia with the railway system of Canada; and further, to secure the completion of such Railway within ten years from the date of the Union.

And the Government of British Columbia agree to convey to the Dominion Government, in trust, to be appropriated in such manner as the Dominion Government may deem advisable in the furtherance of the construction of the said Railway, a similar extent of public lands along the line of Railway, throughout its entire length in British Columbia, not to exceed, however, Twenty (20) Miles on each side of the said line, as may be appropriated for the same purpose by the Dominion Government from the public lands in the North-West Territories and the Province of Manitoba. Provided, that the quantity of lands which may be held under preemption right or by Crown grant within the limits of the tract of land in British Columbia to be so conveyed to the Dominion Government shall be made good to the Dominion from contiguous public lands; and, provided, further, that until the commencement within two years, as aforesaid, from the date of the union, of the construction of the said Railway, the Government of British Columbia shall not sell or alienate any further portions of the public lands of British Columbia in any other way than under right of preemption, requiring actual residence of the preemptor on the land claimed by him. In consideration of the land to be so conveyed in aid of the construction of the said Railway, the Dominion Government agree to pay to British Columbia, from the date of the union, the sum of 100,000 dollars per annum, in half-yearly payments in advance.³

² Cited in full in: British North America Acts and selected Statutes, 1867-1948, Ottawa, King's Printer, 1948, p. 153.

³ Ibid., p. 157.

Although the Terms of Union stated, in effect, that the construction of the transcontinental railway should be started from both ends by July 20, 1873, the surveys necessary for the selection of a route were not completed in the allotted time. From 1873 to 1878 the provincial and federal governments were usually in disagreement over the question of the railway, the provincial government wishing the immediate construction of the railway, and the federal government needing time to complete adequate mountain surveys for what, it had now fully realized, was to be a gigantic undertaking.⁴ In October, 1879, the federal government finally adopted a route which is virtually the one today followed by the Canadian Pacific Railway. In 1879, also, construction work began on a portion of the railway from Emory's Bar to Savona's Ferry. In June, 1880, the Canadian Pacific Railway Company was formed to build the remainder of the railroad, and to complete it by May 1, 1891.⁵ The company received \$25,000,000 and 25,000,000 acres of land from the federal government for finishing the project.

There remained one great obstacle before the railway could be completed. Until 1881 there was no indication of the route which the line was to follow in crossing the Selkirk Range.

⁴ The best treatment of the troublesome early relations of the provincial and federal governments is to be found in: Ormsby, M.A., The relations between British Columbia and the Dominion of Canada, 1871-1885, Phd. thesis, Bryn Mawr, n.d.

⁵ The definitive history of the Canadian Pacific Railway is: Innis, H.A., A history of the Canadian Pacific Railway, London, King, 1923.

When Major A.B. Rogers became the engineer-in-charge of the mountain division of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1880, he decided to seek a pass through the Selkirks, hoping thus to avoid a detour around the range via the Big Bend of the Columbia River.⁶ In April, 1881, therefore, he led a party up the Illecillewaet River to its forks, where Walter Moberly had been forced back in 1865, and followed the east fork to a point which Rogers decided was the main summit of the Selkirk Range. In July, 1882, Rogers penetrated the Selkirks from the east, via the Beaver River, passed through the rugged pass between Mounts Macdonald and Tupper, and descended into the Illecillewaet, thus ending the search for the railway route. In September, 1882, the railway company adopted the route which followed the Kicking Horse Pass, crossed the Selkirks via Rogers Pass, and penetrated the Gold Range by Eagle Pass.

In 1884 and 1885 two vast armies of construction crews began to converge from both east and west upon the Second Crossing of the Columbia River, completing the gap which separated the two portions of the railway. Farwell suddenly came into existence as the central point for the supplying of the two groups. One writer thus described his impressions of the new-born town:

...I trotted along a flat trail into the broad valley of the Columbia, bounded with dim, smoke-shrouded rows of mountains...

6 Palmer, Howard, "Notes on the exploration and the geography of the northern Selkirks," Bulletin of the American Geographical Society, vol. 44 (April, 1912), pp. 241-256.

I was once more in a 'city' of five or six hundred people, nine-tenths men, the forerunner of the present Revelstoke. It was about six months old, but already had a history, for it had been swept by the inevitable fire, which not only licked up the log and canvas buildings but destroyed many square miles of splendid forest around.

The city was once more housed, many of the log buildings blackened by fire, and close by there rose dismal black trunks into a sky still grey with smoke. The coppery sun shone down intensely hot on the whitish-grey street, literally of dust and ashes, and at a little distance the broad Columbia, a grey flood of muddy water, licked and lapped at its muddy banks, which every now and then caved and collapsed where undermined by the current.

An uglier place probably never existed than this first edition of Revelstoke, with the smoke and ashes of its premature conflagration still hovering about it.⁷

Another contemporary observer wrote of Farwell in 1885:

The town...consisted of one street, on either side of which were wooden and log shacks...Considerable business was carried on here, as it was the half-way place between both ends of the railway under construction as well as being on the river and handy for down-river boats and for miners who passed up and down to the mines of the Big Bend. The town was well situated on the high banks of the Columbia, and gave promise of becoming a big place in future years...the life was exciting, especially on pay days. There were brawls continually and gambling night and day with men of all nationalities throwing away their hard-earned pay at faro, stud poker and other games of chance...On the afternoon of November 6, 1885, several of us left Farwell on a train consisting of an engine and tender and three flat cars loaded with rails - the last train to load rails for Craigellachie...All through the night the rails were laid from both East and West, and early the following morning, November 7, we were astir, watching the rails gradually approaching each other. Soon there remained but a single rail to be laid. The distance was measured; it was discovered that the rail was about three feet too long, and while this was being shortened, Sir Donald Smith and his party came on the scene. They watched the proceedings in readiness to drive the last spike. Then the rail was laid....Finally, there remained but one more spike to be driven. It was partly driven in and a hammer was given to Sir Donald

⁷ Coleman, A.P., The Canadian Rockies, new and old trails, Toronto, Frowde, 1911, pp. 56-57.

Smith to drive it home...Then he quickly and in a most workmanlike manner, drove the spike home. Everybody cheered; the locomotives whistled and shrieked; several short speeches were made; hands were shaken, and Major Rogers...became so gleeful that he up-ended a huge tie and tried to mark the spot by the side of the track by sticking it in the ground.⁸

It was shortly after the driving of the last spike at Craigellachie that the name of "Revelstoke" was first applied to the settlement on the Columbia River. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company was unable to secure a site for a railway station and railway yards from A.S. Farwell,⁹ and, therefore, selected a depot site a short distance from Farwell's townsite. In 1886 the company began to call the station "Revelstoke" in honour of Edward Charles Baring, first Baron Revelstoke, who had contributed heavily to the financial success of the railway company at the lowest ebb of its financial history.¹⁰

Since the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway, only one branch line has been built from Revelstoke; yet Revelstoke was in the thick of the battle of financial giants waged in the 1890's between the Canadian Pacific Railway and the American railways pushing their tentacle-like branch lines into British Columbia from the south to drain all of the trade of

⁸ Mallendaine, Edward, in the Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940. Colonel Edward Mallendaine, as a young man of seventeen years, had witnessed the driving of the last spike of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

⁹ Revelstoke Kootenay Star, February 6, 1892.

¹⁰ Burke, Sir J.B., A genealogical and heraldic history of the peerage, baronetage and knightage, London, Burke's Peerage, 1953, pp. 1770-1771.

the Kootenays to Spokane.¹¹ To combat the American companies, the Canadian Pacific Railway at first relied upon its own main line and the services of the independent steamers upon the Columbia River and Kootenay Lake, but, eventually, finding such an arrangement unprofitable, the company sought other means. In 1891 the company completed a branch line from Robson, on the Columbia, to Nelson, on Kootenay Lake.¹² This line, thought the company, would encourage the shipping of ores via a combined water and rail route to the smelter at Revelstoke.¹³ No such thing happened: the mines continued to ship ores southward; the smelter at Revelstoke failed to operate. The Canadian Pacific Railway had to continue its search for a way to overcome the forces of geography.

In July, 1891, the Canadian Pacific Railway Company secured a federal charter authorizing it to construct a railway twenty-five miles in length from Revelstoke to the head of the Upper Arrow Lake.¹⁴ Under the provisions of the Act, the federal government agreed to grant the company a subsidy of \$3,200 per

11 For a detailed study of the struggle by the various railway companies to secure the trade of the Kootenays, see: Howay, F.W., Sage, W.N., and Angus, H.F., ed., British Columbia and the United States, Toronto, Ryerson, 1942. (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Division of Economics and History, The relations of Canada and the United States.) pp. 248-263.

12 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, June 6, 1891.

13 Ibid., August 16, 1890; Canada, Department of Mines, Geological Survey of Canada, Report, 1890-1891, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1891, p. 13A.

14 Canada, 55-56 Vic., c. 5.

mile of railway built. The line was to be commenced before August 1, 1894, and to be completed within four years. The Annual report of the company for 1892 said that the major reason for the construction of the branch line was the fact that the Columbia River was navigable for only three months of the year, thus making precarious the company's dependence upon outside shipping facilities.¹⁵ In 1892 the company carried out the surveys for the railway, and began clearing the right-of-way for the line south of Revelstoke in July, 1893. Unfortunately, the heavy snowfall in the winter of 1893-1894 and an unusually hot spring resulted in the flooding of the Columbia River in May and June.¹⁶ The turbulent river washed out several railway bridges, damaged trails and flooded the constructed portions of the Arrow Lake railway. The river also carried away huge slices of the bank at Revelstoke, forcing the residents to move many of the houses back from the water's edge to other sites. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company had to stop work on the Arrowhead branch in order to repair the damage done by the floods around Revelstoke and at other places on the main line. Work was resumed on the new line in September, 1895, and the Revelstoke and Arrow Lakes Branch was completed to Arrowhead in 1896. At Arrowhead the line connected with the steamers

15 Canadian Pacific Railway Company, Annual report for the fiscal year 1892 (hereafter referred to as C.P.R., Annual report), Montreal, n.p., 1893, p. 11.

16 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, June 9, 1894.

plying the Columbia River. In December, 1896, the Canadian Pacific Railway Company acquired the holdings of the Columbia and Kootenay Steam Navigation Company, and thus, controlling the transportation routes of the Columbia River, could compete on more favourable terms with the American firms.¹⁷

In the construction days of the Canadian Pacific Railway, Farwell had been an important point of supply, the S.S. Kootenai carrying construction materials there to equip the army of labourers.¹⁸ After the completion of the railway, Donald became the headquarters for the mountain division of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and had the major share of the shops and other facilities of the railway. As early as 1892, rumours began to circulate in Revelstoke that the railway company intended to erect new works in the town.¹⁹ Revelstoke, at the time, was an important junction for the railway, the point where passengers changed from the railway to the steamers, or boarded the main line from the steamers, but the town was between the mountain division, centered on Donald, and the Shuswap division, which extended to Kamloops. In 1895 the Kootenay Mail reported that the railway company intended soon to centre its activities on Revelstoke, and to make the town the divisional point for everything between Canmore, Alberta,

17 C.P.R., Annual report, 1896, pp. 9-10.

18 Victoria Colonist, May 13, 1885.

19 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, November 26, 1892.

and Kamloops.²⁰ In November, 1896, the newspaper stated that the Donald shops would soon be moved to Revelstoke.²¹ The population of Revelstoke, said the Mail, would be increased by two hundred people, and the town itself would receive a great impetus in trade and growth. Late in 1896 and early in 1897, some of the people of Donald began purchasing lots in Revelstoke to be able to build when the anticipated move came.²²

In 1897 Donald was a sizeable town, having some government buildings, an hotel, two general stores, a combined drug, stationery and post office store, a public and ^Aprivate school and three churches.²³ The basis of the town's existence, however, was its collection of railway shops. Without the shops, there would remain only lumbering and a little mining. The people of the town were reluctant to see the railway shops moved to Revelstoke. In 1897, nevertheless, the movement of the railway's facilities from Donald to Revelstoke began. In May, Revelstoke became the telegraphic headquarters and repeating station for the area from Kamloops to Donald.²⁴ In 1897,

20 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, December 14, 1895.

21 Ibid., November 28, 1896.

22 Revelstoke Herald, January 27, 1897.

23 Ibid., February 20, 1897.

24 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, May 8, 1897.

the company built the Hotel Revelstoke, opening it on July 26, constructed a round house and large new freight sheds, and established most of the former activities of Donald in Revelstoke.²⁵ In August, 1898, the company began construction of machine and repair shops in Revelstoke, and by the end of the year had started transferring Donald's population to Revelstoke.²⁶ By the end of 1899, the movement of the shop facilities and the population of Donald was completed. In 1899, Revelstoke secured incorporation as a city, achieved the status of a divisional point, acquired most of the people and buildings of Donald, and, as a result of the influx of people, experienced a building boom.²⁷

In 1905, the Canadian Pacific Railway enhanced Revelstoke's status as a railway centre by constructing a new, two-storey station, complete with telegraphic, baggage, express, despatching and accounting offices, and also offices for the divisional trainmaster, resident engineer, superintendent, roadmaster and bridge and building inspector.²⁸

Since 1896 no new lines have been constructed from Revelstoke. Many railways passing through Revelstoke have been

25 Revelstoke Herald, July 28, 1897; Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, January 1, 1898.

26 Ibid., July 30 and October 29, 1898.

27 Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

28 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, December 25, 1905.

planned,²⁹ but the only major piece of construction in the mountain division of the Canadian Pacific Railway since 1896 has been the famous engineering feat, the building of the Connaught Tunnel. Originally, Major A.B. Rogers had devised the great loop of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the tortuous curves around Mounts Abbott and Cheops, to enable the line to drop from the heights of Rogers Pass to the bed of the Illecillewaet River.³⁰ The snowfall in Rogers Pass is extremely heavy, and causes frequent slides. On March 4, 1910, work crews were clearing away one such slide near the summit of Rogers Pass when tons of ice and snow suddenly avalanched from above, and buried the entire crew of a work train under thirty feet of snow, killing fifty-eight men, most of them residents of Revelstoke.³¹ It was to overcome such slides and accidents that the railway company constructed the five-mile-long Connaught Tunnel under Mount Macdonald, between Connaught and Glacier. The tunnel was opened in 1916. Since 1916 the loss of life from railway accidents around Revelstoke has been relatively low. Between 1920 and 1925 the settlement at Glacier thrived while

29 For a summary of the proposed railways passing through Revelstoke, see: Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

30 Wheeler, A.O., The Selkirk Mountains; a guide for Mountain climbers and pilgrims, Winnipeg, Stovel [1911], passim.

31 British Columbia, Attorney-General, Inquisition, 1910, no. 72, MS, Archives of B.C.

the company lined the tunnel with a concrete jacket. The carrying out of the entire project was a tribute to modern engineering.

The construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway in the mountain sectors introduced the first large, semi-permanent body of population into the area around modern Revelstoke. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company hired men for construction work wherever it could, and assembled approximately 5,000 men along the route between Kamloops and Golden in 1884 and 1885. These men came mainly from eastern Canada, the United States, the British Isles and continental Europe. After the railway was completed, many of them moved on to other fields. Some, however, remained in the employ of the company as engineers, firemen, trainmen, conductors, section men, telegraphers, station agents and in other capacities.

Revelstoke became an important point on the railway almost as soon as the line was completed, gradually becoming the centre of the company's activities in the mountain division, and finally achieving the status of a divisional point. Revelstoke supplied the crews that maintained intact and in running order the line through the Selkirks. Into Revelstoke came more workers, as the centre became more important, and, in their wake, wives and families. Revelstoke's railway payrolls have been the backbone of the community's existence since 1885, and will continue to be the raison d'etre for the region as long as the centre thrives. Revelstoke, deprived of her status as a railway divisional point, would have to depend upon a precarious live-

lihood from the adjacent mineral resources, from the tourist trade, and from the neighbouring sawmills.

Railway work, strenuous and often dangerous, has drawn many foreign-born people into Revelstoke. These people have settled, married, raised families and sent many of their children out to work for the railway company. The younger people who do not work for the railway either leave Revelstoke or else seek employment in the forests and mills to the south. There are few other occupations for them in Revelstoke.

The type of person attracted to the city in the past has varied, but the total population has remained relatively stable. The small fluctuation is best illustrated by the following table of population:

| Year | Revelstoke district ³² | Revelstoke city ³³ | Total |
|------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1901 | 3,003 | 1,600 | 4,603 |
| 1911 | 2,655 | 3,017 | 5,672 |
| 1921 | 1,592 | 2,782 | 4,374 |
| 1931 | not available | 2,736 | ----- |
| 1941 | 3,532 | 2,106 | 5,638 ³⁴ |
| 1951 | 4,764 | 2,917 | 7,681 ³⁴ |

In fifty years the population of the city and district has increased from 4,603 to 7,681 inhabitants. The relative stability of the total population, however, does not mean that the character

³² The various census returns seem to differ in their meaning of the term "Revelstoke district." Usually, however, they include the populations of the Eagle River Valley, the Big Bend, and the railway points east of Revelstoke along the Illecillewaet River to the summit of the Selkirk Range. Canada, Department of Trade and Commerce, Sixth census of Canada, 1921 (hereafter referred to as Canada, Sixth census, 1921), Ottawa, Acland, 1924, vol. 1, p. 216.

³³ Canada, Department of Trade and Commerce, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Ninth census of Canada, 1951 (hereafter referred to as Canada, Ninth census, 1951), Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1953, vol. 1, p. 18.

³⁴ British Columbia, Department of Trade and Industry, Regional Development Division, Regional industrial index of British Columbia, 1952, Victoria, Queen's Printer, 1953, p. 7.

of the population has not changed. There are no detailed figures available for the racial origins of the population prior to 1901, but census figures for 1891 indicate that 4,841 people of a total population of 13,661 in the huge Yale-Kootenay electoral riding, which then included Revelstoke, were foreign born, the remainder having been born in Canada.³⁵ After 1901 the census figures are more detailed, permitting a tabular examination of the major population groups of Revelstoke city itself.

| <u>Racial origin</u> | <u>1901</u> ³⁶ | <u>1911</u> ³⁷ | <u>1921</u> ³⁸ | <u>1931</u> ³⁹ | <u>1941</u> ⁴⁰ |
|----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| English | 910 | 487 | 819 | 784 | 700 |
| Scottish | 626 | 398 | 649 | 622 | 465 |
| Irish | 551 | 363 | 337 | 391 | 263 |
| Italian | 138 | 195 | 431 | 363 | 260 |
| Scandinavian | 403 | 241 | 156 | 185 | 141 |
| French | 173 | 110 | 75 | 74 | 64 |
| German | 94 | 85 | 31 | 41 | 48 |
| Oriental | 436 | 307 | 109 | 106 | 29 |
| Others | 1,272 | 831 | 175 | 170 | 136 |
| Total | 4,603 | 3,017 | 2,782 | 2,736 | 2,106 |

³⁵ Yale-Kootenay electoral riding in 1891 included East and West Kootenay, the Boundary region, the area around Kamloops and the Thompson River, the Okanagan Valley, and the district including the Nicola-Similkameen country. Canada, Department of Agricultural, Third census of Canada, 1891 (hereafter referred to as Canada, Third census, 1891), Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1894, vol. 2, p. 228.

³⁶ The figures for 1901 include both Revelstoke district and Revelstoke city, the detailed breakdown for the city not being given. The population of the city then was 1,600. Canada, Department of Agriculture, Fourth census of Canada, 1901 (hereafter referred to as Canada, Fourth census, 1901), Ottawa, King's Printer, 1902, vol. 1, pp. 284-285.

³⁷ Canada, Department of Trade and Commerce, Fifth census of Canada, 1911 (hereafter referred to as Canada, Fifth census, 1911), Ottawa, King's Printer, 1912, vol. 2, pp. 168-169.

³⁸ Canada, Sixth census, 1921, vol. 1, p. 558.

³⁹ Canada, Department of Trade and Commerce, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Seventh census of Canada, 1931 (hereafter referred to as Canada, Seventh census, 1931), Ottawa, King's Printer, 1934, vol. 6, pp. 482-483.

⁴⁰ Canada, Department of Trade and Commerce, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Eighth census of Canada, 1941 (hereafter referred to as Canada, Eighth census, 1941), Ottawa, King's Printer, 1944, vol. 2, pp. 498-499.

The largest groups have always included those people of British origin, but other nationalities have, at times, been numerous. The Oriental population was considerable in 1901, but has declined steadily ever since. In 1901 the railway company was still using Chinese and Japanese on railway construction and maintenance crews, but in subsequent years hired fewer Orientals. In 1951 the Oriental population of Revelstoke was almost non-existent.

In the 1890's Revelstoke was a stopping place for many immigrants from the United States entering Canada on their way to the Canadian prairies. These immigrants came up the Columbia River to Revelstoke on the river steamers, and then boarded eastbound trains for the prairies.⁴¹ In the 1890's, also, Revelstoke received a large number of Italians who came to work on the construction of the Revelstoke and Arrowhead branch of the Canadian Pacific Railway.⁴² These Italians joined an already numerous group of their compatriots who had entered the area during the construction of the main line of the Canadian Pacific in the 1880's. The Italian population in Revelstoke has been a

41 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, October 22, November 19, 1892, and May 12, 1894.

42 Ibid., December 16, 1893.

community-conscious group, supporting local community undertakings, taking an active part in Revelstoke's civic affairs and yet retaining its identity as a group sufficiently to contribute to the city a definite atmosphere and flavour. Many Scandinavians arrived in the area in the 1880's as railway construction workers, and they, too, have been prominent in the city, organizing their own social club as early as 1908, the Scandinavian Aid and Fellowship Society, Lodge No. 62.⁴³ Both the Italian and Scandinavian groups are still prominent in the region, many of the native-born people of Revelstoke having Italian or Scandinavian origins. In 1915 Revelstoke was the site of an internment camp containing approximately two hundred enemy aliens, mainly Austrians.⁴⁴ These aliens were used briefly on public projects around Revelstoke, road-building, trail-clearing and similar work, and were then dispersed to other camps. In the 1930's a Ukrainian settlement established itself at Mount Cartier, between Revelstoke and Arrowhead.⁴⁵

An examination of the population from the viewpoint of religion is also interesting.

43 Revelstoke Mail-Herald, October 14, 1908.

44 Ibid., September 8, 1915.

45 Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

| Denomination | 1891 ⁴⁶ | 1911 ⁴⁷ | 1931 ⁴⁸ | 1941 ⁴⁹ | 1951 ⁵⁰ |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Church of England | 515 | 675 | 673 | 559 | 700 |
| Presbyterian | 316 | 682 | 104 | 112 | 97 |
| Methodist | 112 | 473 | --- | --- | --- |
| United Church | --- | --- | 1,087 | 862 | 1,232 |
| Lutheran | 143 | 123 | 72 | 32 | 72 |
| Baptist | 43 | 136 | 42 | 40 | 41 |
| Roman Catholic | 510 | 657 | 624 | 455 | 633 |
| Other | 546 | 271 | 134 | 46 | 142 |
| Total | 2,185 | 3,017 | 2,736 | 2,106 | 2,917 |

The presence in Revelstoke of so many people with Italian or Irish racial origins explains the relative stability in numbers of the Roman Catholic population over the years. The other large groups, the adherents of the Church of England, the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches, have also been constant. The United Church of Canada, since its formation from the Methodist and Presbyterian denominations in 1925, has had the largest number of followers in the city.

Revelstoke has witnessed surprisingly little friction between her varied racial and religious groups. The major cause of social and economic unrest in the city has always arisen from Revelstoke's position as a railway centre. Railway brotherhoods and unions established their local lodges at Revelstoke as soon as it became a divisional point, as they did,

46 Canada, Third census, 1891, vol. 1, pp. 226-227. The figures for 1891 include both Revelstoke district and the town itself. Subsequent figures include only Revelstoke city.

47 Canada, Fifth census, 1911, vol. 2, p. 10.

48 Canada, Seventh census, 1931, vol. 6, pp. 688-689.

49 Canada, Eighth census, 1941, vol. 2, p. 637.

50 Canada, Ninth census, 1951, vol. 1, p. 41-89.

similarly, at the various divisional points across the system of the Canadian Pacific Railway. From these local centres, as well as from their national or international headquarters, they waged their campaigns for union recognition and better working conditions. The railway men of Revelstoke have gone on strike on many occasions since 1885. Today a railway strike usually concerns thousands of men in many different railway unions and brotherhoods, all of which are linked under one or two all-inclusive unions. In the past, however, railway strikes have sometimes involved a single class of employee, such as telegraphers, engineers or section men, and frequently unions representing different types of employees have worked at cross purposes, one group often failing to support, or worse, warring bitterly with, another. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company, moreover, has been a strong opponent of some of the demands of the unions, and has not given way to these demands without a struggle.⁵¹ Gradually, however, the different types of employees secured recognition by the company of their individual unions, and then began to advance towards the powerful railway unions of the present day. From 1885 to 1900 the unions had a hard struggle securing members, persuading the railway company to hire union labour, and securing recognition of the unions by the company. From 1900 to 1910 the membership rolls of railway unions and brotherhoods swelled rapidly, and by 1916 formed approximately

⁵¹ For a clear discussion of railway trade union activities in Canada and British Columbia, see: Logan, H.A., The history of trade-union organization in Canada, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1928. (Consult particularly pp. 124-127, 151-152, 369-371 and 390-397.)

thirty percent of all organized labour in Canada. The process was slow, however, and the cost, both to the men and to the company, was often high.

The Revelstoke region witnessed its first strike of railway employees in 1885 when the company was unable to pay its construction workers for three consecutive months. The men finally went on strike to secure their back wages. During the strike over 5,000 men working in the area between Eagle Pass and Golden concentrated in Revelstoke.⁵² The company, which was in the throes of a financial crisis, finally acquired the money to pay its men, thus ending the strike.

An early strike involving both an increase in wages and union recognition occurred in March, 1892, when the trainmen and conductors of the Pacific Division of the Canadian Pacific Railway, including those trainmen and conductors working out of Revelstoke, went on strike, seeking recognition of their union. The railway company ordered the strikers to withdraw from their union or be dismissed. The men resisted, and many of them were fired. The company subsequently reversed its stand, gave the men an increase in wages, and rehired the strikers. The question of union recognition, however, was not settled. Revelstoke's interest in the strike was apparently slight, for the Kootenay Star newspaper makes almost no mention of the five-day long struggle in March, 1892.⁵³

52 Victoria Colonist, April 19, 1885.

53 Victoria Colonist, March 20 and 24, 1892; Revelstoke Kootenay Star, March 19 and 26, 1892.

In September, 1896, the Order of Railway Telegraphers, including all of the telegraphers, dispatchers and station agents employed by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, went on strike to secure recognition by the company of the union, better working conditions and higher salaries.⁵⁴ The company continued to operate its scheduled trains because no other group of employees joined the telegraphers in the strike. All of the Revelstoke members of the union went out, and were replaced by imported workers. Several railway brotherhoods representing other categories of employees acted as mediators between the telegraphers and the company, and, eight days after the strike began, were able to secure for the strikers recognition by the company of the Order of Railway Telegraphers, a basic minimum wage, and better working conditions.⁵⁵ The strikers secured a definite victory. Revelstoke's participation in the strike was small, but the town's sympathy apparently was with the strikers.

In 1900, the railway company, on the grounds of retrenchment, laid off many machinists, fitters, boiler makers and other allied mechanics.⁵⁶ The unions representing these groups

54 Victoria Colonist, October 1, 2 and 8, 1896; Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, October 3 and 10, 1896.

55 Victoria Colonist, October 8, 1896.

56 Revelstoke Herald, August 7, 1900.

claimed that the company discriminated against union men in the lay-offs.⁵⁷ The unions also charged that the company had failed to abide by an agreement of 1899 whereby the company and the union leaders were to meet annually in Winnipeg to discuss grievances of the employees.⁵⁸ The dispute culminated in a twenty-eight-day strike in August, 1900, when one thousand machinists from Fort William to Vancouver went on strike.⁵⁹

In Revelstoke fifteen machinists and fitters laid down their tools.⁶⁰ The strikers were orderly in Revelstoke, so orderly that one local newspaper, the Kootenay Mail, failed to mention the strike while it was on, and the other newspaper, the Herald, did little more. The strike ended inconclusively, and the strikers in Revelstoke were re-hired by the company.

Less than ten months later, in June, 1901, all the members of the Brotherhood of Railway Trackmen of America working for the Canadian Pacific Railway went on strike, seeking union recognition by the company, a collective agreement over the entire railway system, better hours and higher wages.⁶¹ In

57 Revelstoke Herald, August 7, 1900.

58 Ibid., August 3, 1900.

59 Vancouver Province, August 3, 15 and 31, 1900.

60 Revelstoke Herald, August 3, 1900.

61 Vancouver Province, June 17, 1901; Bennett, William, Builders of British Columbia, Vancouver, Broadway Printers, 1937, p. 38.

1901 the trackmen were earning ninety cents per day, and they asked for an increase of sixty cents per day. When the railway company refused to consider the increase, all the trackmen in the Mountain Division quit working, over five hundred strikers gathering in Revelstoke.⁶² The city was greatly excited during the eleven weeks of the strike's duration. The company hired strike-breakers, and settled in for a fight to the finish.⁶³ When the strikers resented the "scab labour," the provincial government placed special constables along the railway line to protect the "scabs" and the company's property.⁶⁴ At a meeting of the citizens on June 28, J.M. Kellie, the former Member of the Legislative Assembly and a very influential man with mining and railway men, roundly condemned the railway company for causing the strike, and strongly criticized the provincial government's use of special constables.⁶⁵ At the same meeting, Mayor William Brown said that everyone in Revelstoke heartily sympathized with the strikers. Thomas Taylor, the Member of the Legislative Assembly for the district, praised the strikers for their orderly conduct, and suggested that the strike be settled by arbitration. As the strike dragged on, the citizens of Revelstoke held entertainments to raise

62 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, June 21, 1901.

63 Vancouver Province, June 17, 1901.

64 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, June 21, 1901.

65 Ibid., June 28, 1901.

money to aid the strikers, and generally showed that their sympathies were entirely with the men.⁶⁶ The Kootenay Mail strongly supported the men, urged the federal government to establish compulsory arbitration and conciliation processes,⁶⁷ and accused the company of importing aliens - Japanese, Chinese and Italians - as strike-breakers.⁶⁸ Some store-keepers and operators of boarding houses for railway workers at Revelstoke refused to serve or feed the strike-breakers. After three months without proper repairs, the tracks of the railway line became so dilapidated and dangerous that the engineers and firemen working for the company threatened to go on strike. This danger forced the railway company to surrender. When the strike ended in August, 1901, both sides and the public were thankful. The company granted pay increases and better hours, and agreed to partial recognition of the trackmen's union.⁶⁹

In March, 1903, the men in the employ of the company at Revelstoke became involved in a strike which had its origins in Vancouver. The United Brotherhood of Railway Employees sought to enroll in its ranks all railway employees not members of any other railway brotherhoods or unions.⁷⁰ It was affiliated with the Western Federation of Miners and the American Labour Union,

66 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, July 5, 1901.

67 Loc. cit.

68 Ibid., July 12, 1901.

69 Ibid., September 6, 1901; Vancouver Province, August 30, 1901; Bennett, op. cit., p. 38.

70 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, March 14, 1903; Bennett, op. cit., pp. 60-62.

two groups which were in considerable disrepute with Canadian and American employers. The United Brotherhood of Railway Employees included many of the machinists on the Canadian Pacific Railway, although the machinists also had their own smaller union, the International Order of Machinists.⁷¹ The railway company recognized the machinists' union but not the larger organization, and sought to force the machinists to drop their affiliations with the United Brotherhood. The machinists refused, and when the larger group went on strike, they, too, struck. About one hundred men at Revelstoke were involved in the strike, which lasted 100 days. The company evidently decided to smash the United Brotherhood, for it utilized every weapon possible to combat the strikers. It was aided in its fight by the antagonism of some of the railway craft unions towards the United Brotherhood. The strike was so bitter that the federal government appointed a Labour Commission to investigate the situation. The strike ended in a victory for the company, the United Brotherhood of Railway Employees was crippled, the rank and file were left suspicious of their leaders, and railway unionism was set back considerably.⁷²

In October, 1908, the company again secured a definite victory when it defeated a strike by the shopmen throughout the

71 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, March 14, 1903.

72 Victoria Colonist, June 13, 1903. For further details on this important strike, see: Bennett, op. cit., pp. 60-62; Saywell, J.T., "Labour and socialism in British Columbia," British Columbia Historical Quarterly, vol. 15 (July-October, 1951), pp. 139-143; and Logan, The history of trade-union organization in Canada, pp. 151-152.

entire system, including the shopmen at Revelstoke. The men secured nothing from the strike, many of them lost their seniority, some lost their jobs, and all of them were irate with their leaders whom they accused of selling out to the company.⁷³

Since 1908 Revelstoke's relations with the railway company have been relatively peaceful. During the Great War period, railway strikes were non-existent. After the war, national railway unions developed their national and local organizations with small stress and strain upon the community. By 1919 ten railway brotherhoods had locals in the town: the International Brotherhood of Blacksmiths, the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers and Iron Shipbuilders of America, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, the Brotherhood of Firemen and Engineers, the International Association of Machinists, the United Brotherhood of Maintenance-of-way Employees and Railway Shop Labourers, the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees, the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, the Brotherhood of Railway Car Men of America and the Order of Railway Conductors.⁷⁴ With so many unions and so many trade unionists in the city, it is surprising to note that Revelstoke's interest in the general strike in Winnipeg in 1919 was small. The issues of the Revelstoke Review for 1919 - the only newspaper then being published in the city - are almost the sole accurate source of information about Revelstoke's reaction to

73 Revelstoke Mail-Herald, August 5 and October 7, 1908.

74 Revelstoke Review, August 7, 1919.

the events in Winnipeg. Those issues devoted most of their lead columns to reports of the return of the district's service men from the European battlefields. As far as the Review was concerned, the Winnipeg General Strike never occurred.

Since 1885 the Canadian Pacific Railway and its employees have been the backbone of the economy of the Revelstoke area. A large percentage of the total income of the people of the region is derived from the railway company.⁷⁵ The future security and stability of Revelstoke, however, is now being threatened. In 1950 the railway company embarked upon a programme of conversion of its locomotives on its mountain division from steam to diesel, a programme estimated to cost approximately \$13,000,000.⁷⁶ The diesel engines eliminate the need for the "pushers" or extra engines required to aid the passenger and freight trains over the mountain division, and thus require fewer engines and fewer crews. In 1951 rumours began to circulate that Revelstoke's day as a centre for railway activity was ending.⁷⁷ In 1953 Nelson, British Columbia, became the maintenance centre for the diesel engines on the Vancouver-Kettle Valley-Medicine Hat line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and

75 In 1911, a typical year, for example, the total monthly payroll from all sources for the workers of Revelstoke was approximately \$200,000, of which the Canadian Pacific Railway Company contributed \$140,000. Revelstoke Mail-Herald, November 29, 1911.

76 Vancouver Sun, January 13, 1950.

77 Victoria Colonist, May 22, 1951; Vancouver Sun, May 19, 1951.

the oil-burning steam engines on both the southern and northern trans-provincial lines of the company were fast being replaced by diesel engines.⁷⁸ What Revelstoke's future status as a railway centre is to be is not yet clear. Without the railway payrolls, Revelstoke will have to rely on the products of the surrounding forests and mines, and on a precarious tourist industry. If the city loses completely its status as a major communications centre, it will have difficult years ahead of it.⁷⁹

78 Victoria Colonist, June 25, July 31, 1953.

79 For the influence of the railway men and unions in political affairs, see the chapters on provincial and federal politics

Chapter Six
Other industries

Although the Revelstoke and Big Bend area is best known for its mining activities, it has also had a long history as a lumbering and sawmilling region. The first sawmill to operate in the Big Bend was the one owned by Lorenzo Bonanato Romano in 1866. Prior to the rush to the Big Bend, L.B. Romano had taken a prominent part in the supplying of food and mining materials to miners in the Cariboo gold rush, and operating pack trains into the Cariboo. He also had a store at Lytton.¹ When the rush to the Big Bend began, his pack trains followed the miners to French Creek, and, to answer the demand of the miners for lumber, Romano decided to establish a sawmill there.² The necessary equipment was taken to Lytton by boat, and then, in March, 1866, by pack train to French Creek.³ By the end of May, 1866, Romano's sawmill was supplying the miners with lumber at a price of \$12.50 per thousand board feet.⁴ When the majority of the miners left the Big Bend at the end of the mining season of 1866, however, Romano closed down his sawmill.

1 Romano, L.B., to W.A.G. Young, September 13, 1861, MS, Archives of B.C.; Victoria Colonist, November 14, 1864.

2 Victoria Colonist, January 8, 1866.

3 Ibid., March 26, 1866.

4 Ibid., June 11, 1866.

Not until the days of railway construction did logging resume in the forests around Revelstoke and the Big Bend.

For a brief time between 1884 and 1886, local timber was used to supply the needs of the railway company. Fred and Dan Robinson, for example, built a sawmill at Beavermouth, and on May 26, 1886, Fred Robinson secured the first timber limit granted in the railway belt by the federal government, obtaining other timber limits in the following years.⁵ The timber possibilities of the Big Bend, however, were not really known until 1890 when Arthur St. Cyr, a Dominion Land Surveyor, made an examination of the forests from Beaver, on the eastern side of the Selkirks, down the Columbia River to the Upper Arrow Lake. St. Cyr reported that most of the good timber in the immediate vicinity of Revelstoke had been burned in several serious forest fires, but that, north of Revelstoke for twenty miles, there were heavy stands of fir, cedar, pine, spruce and hemlock. St. Cyr also said that the Big Eddy, above Revelstoke, was the only place between Beaver and Revelstoke suitable for the booming of logs.⁶

In 1890 Dan Robinson moved to Revelstoke and formed a partnership with J.C. Steen. The two men bought a recently-constructed mill from John Valentine, and began operations

5 Canada, House of Commons, Sessional papers, 1890, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1891, vol. 23, no. 36A, p. 13.

6 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, November 1, 1890.

as the Revelstoke Lumber Company.⁷ The company added sawmill machinery to Valentine's former shingle mill, and in 1890 worked to the capacity of the plant, supplying the local demand, the requirements of the railway, and also the orders for lumber from the east.⁸ For several years the Revelstoke Lumber Company had only one competitor in the area. After selling the shingle mill to Robinson and Steen, John Valentine had secured a timber limit on Greely Creek, about six miles up the Illecillewaet River, and there, in 1891, with James McIntosh, a partner, he had established the Greely Creek Shingle Company.⁹ The Revelstoke Lumber Company, however, was the major producer of lumber in the area for several years thereafter. Buyers in the North West Territories, in particular, ordered large amounts of lumber for building purposes.¹⁰ The firm suffered a temporary setback in November, 1892, when one of the worst fires in Revelstoke's early history destroyed most of the sawmill.¹¹ By March, 1893, however, the company was again shipping lumber, and by April

7 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, October 11, 1890.

8 Ibid., January 3, 1891.

9 Ibid., November 29, 1890, and January 3, 1891.

10 Ibid., March 28, 1891.

11 Ibid., November 19, 1892.

had the sawmill in full operations.¹² In May, 1893, J.C. Steen died, and Dan Robinson, securing Steen's interests, became the sole owner of the company.¹³ The firm prospered in 1894 when it acquired from the Canadian Pacific Railway Company a contract to produce ties for the Revelstoke and Arrow Lake Branch.¹⁴

In 1898 Dan Robinson sold his interests in the Revelstoke Lumber Company to his brother, Fred Robinson.¹⁵ In 1899 Fred Robinson renamed the firm the Fred Robinson Lumber Company, and began an extensive programme of expansion, buying the Kootenay Lumber Company's mill at Comaplix, and securing all of the timber rights between Comaplix and Camborne.¹⁶ The company also owned the small steamers Archer and Lardeau which steamed between Arrowhead and the North Arm.¹⁷

The success of the Fred Robinson Lumber Company naturally attracted the attention of other people interested in the forest industry. In June, 1898, the Sawyer brothers, Richard, Harry and William, in conjunction with Fred Manning began to operate a sash and door factory in Revelstoke.¹⁸ In September, 1901, Dan Robinson and Robert Howson formed a new lumber company,

12 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, April 29, 1893.

13 Ibid., May 6, September 2, 1893.

14 Ibid., February 3, 1894.

15 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, November 21, 1902.

16 Ibid., November 22, 1902.

17 Loc. cit.

18 Ibid., May 7, 1898.

gave it the same name as Robinson's first mill, the Revelstoke Lumber Company, and established a sawmill at the Big Eddy.¹⁹

In October, 1902, Dan Robinson, shortly before his death, sold his interests in the new firm to C.B. Hume and Company.²⁰

Between 1903 and 1905 a temporary lull occurred in the expansion of Revelstoke's lumber industry,²¹ but by 1906 conditions had greatly improved.²² No less than thirteen sawmills were operating in and around Revelstoke, with other mills planned.²³ Revelstoke's considerable prosperity and growth from 1908 to 1910 are largely attributable to the state of the lumber industry in the district. In 1910 it was a daily occurrence to see long trains of lumber coming from the Upper Arrow Lake to the mills at Revelstoke. As mining receded into a somewhat dormant state, lumbering replaced both it and the railway as Revelstoke's major industry. The mills and the railway reacted beneficially upon the development of Revelstoke, the mills hiring large numbers of men, and increasing their output, thereby forcing the railway company to use more trains and to employ more men to handle the lumber. The town, of course, expanded all the while. Despite the number of mills in operation

19 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, September 20, 1901.

20 Ibid., November 21, 1902.

21 Ibid., January 14 and 21, 1905.

22 Kootenay Mail Publishing Company, Picturesque Revelstoke, Kootenay, Kootenay Mail Publishing Company, n.d., p. 7.

23 Loc. cit.

then and later, however, a reliable estimate stated in 1913 that northward from Revelstoke to Canoe River there were still vast stretches of almost untouched, merchantable timber, reaching back on both sides of the Columbia to a height of several thousand feet up the Selkirk and Gold ranges, as well as along the banks of numerous small streams which flow into the Columbia.²⁴

Large amounts of timber have come from the region. In 1914 and 1915, for example, the Forest Mills of British Columbia employed over 350 men, and cut 100,000 board feet of lumber daily at its mill at Comaplix.²⁵ When fire destroyed the company's mill in April, 1915, the firm lost more than seven hundred carloads of lumber, valued then at more than \$200,000.²⁶

Over the years the lumber industry around Revelstoke, Arrowhead and the Big Bend has suffered the same peaks of prosperity and depths of depression felt by the rest of the industry in the province. Despite steady cutting in the periods of prosperity, however, there are still hundreds of square miles of fine timber in the district. In 1940 over four thousand men were employed either in the woods and the mills or in one or

²⁴ British Columbia, Department of Lands, Report of the Minister of Lands, 1913 (hereafter referred to as B.C., Lands Report, 1913), Victoria, King's Printer, 1914, p. 40.

²⁵ Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

²⁶ Revelstoke Mail-Herald, April 7, 1915.

other of the dependent auxiliaries of the lumber industry in or around the area from Canoe River to the Upper Arrow Lake.²⁷

Recently (1953) it was estimated that in 1950 over 8,000,000 board feet of lumber were cut in the Revelstoke area, and that in the area bounded by the Shuswap Lake on the west, the Columbia River at Golden on the east, the Upper Arrow Lake on the south and the Big Bend of the Columbia River on the north, there was a total of 7,672,300,000 board feet of timber, including Douglas Fir, Western Red Cedar, Western Hemlock, Engelmann Spruce, Silver Fir, Lodgepole Pine, White Pine, Yellow Pine and Western Larch.²⁸

An unusual lumber plant in the Revelstoke area deserves mention. In 1946 the Arrowhead Wood Preservers Company, Limited, began operating three miles south of Revelstoke.²⁹ At the time of its establishment, the plant was unique, being the only one of its particular type in Canada. Using a special solution, pentichloralphenol, the plant processes wood with the chemical and prolongs its life. With wood now being used in many aspects of every day life, perhaps other companies producing other wood products may decide to establish themselves in Revelstoke to take advantage of the rich timber resources of the region.

27 Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

28 British Columbia, Department of Trade and Industry, Regional Development Division, Regional industrial index of British Columbia, 1952, Victoria, Queen's Printer, 1953, p. 52.

29 Revelstoke Review, November 29, 1945, September 19, 1946; Vancouver Sun, November 1, 1947, April 12, 1949.

In addition to the potentially rich timber resources in the mountainous area between the Upper Arrow Lake and Canoe River, there is a surprisingly large amount of land available for farming. Although the region is extensively forested, and is largely occupied today by mineral claims and timber rights, there are scattered patches of land suitable for agricultural purposes, situated mainly along the main waterway and at the mouths of the tributary streams. Over long periods of time, soil washed down from the mountainsides, or else deposited by the streams during periods of high water, has collected along the Columbia's banks, and now awaits the prospective settler. In 1949 the British Columbia Department of Lands estimated that the area extending from the Big Bend to the Arrow Lakes contained 250,000 acres of agricultural land, of which total only 7,500 acres were being cultivated in 1949, 125,000 acres more were cultivable, and the remaining acreage was suitable for meadow, hay or pasture land.³⁰ Beginning from Canoe River, at the northern tip of the Big Bend, there are approximately 12,000 acres of good, prospective farm land near the site of the historic Boat Encampment of David Thompson's era.³¹ Farther south, along the banks of the Columbia, there are agricultural areas on both sides of the valley. Along the

30 British Columbia, Department of Lands, Revelstoke and Golden Land Recording District, Victoria, King's Printer, 1949 (Bulletin series, no. 21, 1949), passim.

31 Loc. cit.

river flats and lower benches in the immediate vicinity of Revelstoke, there are also some fine lands which have been cultivated for years with good results.³² Vegetables, hardy tree and small fruits, and even grains grow well. West of Revelstoke, along the route of the Canadian Pacific Railway through Eagle Pass and towards Three Valley and Malakwa, there are good farm lands capable of producing almost any type of hardy crops.³³ East of Revelstoke, up the valley of the Illecillewaet River, there are two agricultural areas - Albert Canyon and Greely Creek - where the river valley opens widely enough to permit the location of small farms. The land along the banks of the Illecillewaet River is fertile and productive. Summer frost, however, endangers crops on the higher levels. South of Revelstoke there are several areas where farming is a profitable business. Although the area surrounding the North East Arm of the Upper Arrow Lake is noted primarily for its lumber output, there are sections on both sides of the arm between Arrowhead, at the entrance, and Beaton, at the head, which could be tilled. In addition, certain sections between Beaton and Camborne, and Beaton and Trout Lake are well-adapted to mixed farming and fruit-growing.

The agricultural potentialities of the Big Bend area first became generally known in August, 1895, when the provincial government sent R.H. Lee, a Provincial Land Surveyor, up the

32 British Columbia, Department of Lands, Revelstoke and Golden Land Recording District, passim.

33 Loc. cit.

Columbia River from Revelstoke to learn what possibilities the region had for purposes of agriculture, lumbering, mining and settlement. After the journey Lee reported that two essentials - a steamer service to Canoe River and a wagon road - were necessary for the proper development of the district.³⁴ He also estimated that it would take \$82,000 to make the river navigable for a steamer. A steamer, however, was not to operate regularly to the Big Bend for another six years.

The first man to practice farming in the Revelstoke region was Frederick Fraser,³⁵ and in subsequent years other farmers followed Fraser. By 1910 improved farm lands were in demand,

34 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, October 12, 1895.

35 Born at Sheerness, England, about 1859, Fraser came to Canada about 1866, and in 1879 joined the construction crews of the Canadian Pacific Railway at Jackfish Bay on Lake Superior. He came west with the railway, stopping in Moose Jaw to marry Catherine Bennett on January 1, 1884. Fraser worked on the railway between Calgary and Revelstoke, and was present at the driving of the last spike at Craigellachie on November 7, 1885. Shortly afterwards he took up land at Revelstoke, just across the Columbia River from the town of Farwell, near the tracks of the railway which he had helped to build. He established himself as a grower of, and dealer in, garden and dairy produce, and by 1888 had a thriving business. He also raised and sold dairy cattle and other stock to any one else interested in those aspects of farming. His efforts were not always successful. In the great flood of 1894, for example, the Columbia spilled its waters over five acres of his fruit trees, strawberry bushes and potato plants, and for a while threatened to destroy his house. Despite the roughness of the country and the quirks of Nature, however, Fraser and his wife developed their farm and raised a family of nine children. The oldest child, Florence, born on May 18, 1887, was the first white child born in Revelstoke, and the second child, Jack, was one of the first two boys born in the town. To Mrs. Fraser probably belongs the distinction of being the first "respectable" woman in Revelstoke. Fred Fraser subsequently had a career of some note, serving the provincial government from 1897 to 1929 in various capacities in Revelstoke, Fort Fraser and Pouce Coupe, as well as serving with the Canadian Forestry Corps overseas in World War One. He died in Victoria in November, 1939. Victoria Times, November 27, 1939; Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, May 19, 1894; Revelstoke Review, December 1, 1939; Revelstoke Kootenay Star, March 31 and June 2, 1894.

selling at a price of approximately \$100 per acre.³⁶ In 1913, Robert Gordon, the Government Agent at Revelstoke, stated that there were some very fine farms in the region, particularly towards the Upper Arrow Lake, which had been well-tended for several years, but that there were several formidable handicaps to farming in the district: frost on the higher levels of some creeks was a serious matter in late spring and early fall; the winter snowfalls were heavy, and thus forced farmers to adopt the expensive process of indoor-stabling of stock; the land suitable for farming was often hard to clear; labour was scarce and expensive; and, finally, Nature had so arranged the mighty mountains and racing rivers that puny man scarcely had room for his small farms in the narrow river valleys.³⁷ Gordon's pessimistic approach to the possibilities of agriculture around Revelstoke seems to have been a realistic one because, although today there is some successful growing of farm produce, particularly in the dairying industry, the Revelstoke and Big Bend district is still basically a source of lumber and minerals, and will doubtless remain so for many years to come.³⁸

Another possible industry for Revelstoke is that of brick-making. When the Kootenay Smelting and Trading Syndicate

36 Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

37 B.C., Lands report, 1913, pp. 40-42.

38 British Columbia, Department of Trade and Industry, Regional Development Bureau, Regional industrial index of British Columbia, 1949, Victoria, King's Printer, 1950, p. 52.

established its smelter in Revelstoke in 1890, some of the company's engineers tested several types of clay in the area, and found one that was suitable for the manufacturing of bricks. In 1890 the company constructed a brickyard, and in that year manufactured over 300,000 bricks, selling them locally as well as at Illecillewaet, Donald and Golden.³⁹ At first the company was hampered by a lack of skilled workers, and by unusually wet weather, but by the summer of 1890 the brickyard was manufacturing a good product. In a report to the shareholders of the company in 1890, L.R.C. Boyle stated that the brickyard would be a future profitable sideline to the company's smelting operations.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, the brickyard ceased to operate when the smelter proved a failure, and Revelstoke temporarily lost what might have been a profitable industry.

In 1902 C.B. Hume and Company acquired the site of the old smelter brickyard, and began turning out approximately 15,000 bricks a day.⁴¹ From Hume's brickyard came much of the brick with which many of Revelstoke's older buildings were constructed. The company worked sporadically for several years, providing enough bricks for the local demand. In 1905 it found itself in competition with a new industry, the manufacture of cement blocks for building purposes, when E.C. Fromey began to produce a brick made of cement.⁴²

39 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, October 4, 1890.

40 Ibid., October 11, 1890.

41 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, July 11, 1902.

42 Ibid., May 27, 1905.

For some reason, probably the lack of a market, the making of bricks in Revelstoke languished. In the boom year of 1909, however, after repeated urging from the Revelstoke Board of Trade, the firm of C.B. Hume and Company resumed the manufacture of bricks, this time utilizing the Tumwater clay fields and modern machinery.⁴³ Since 1909 Revelstoke has usually had some type of brick-making facilities, or a brick-supplying firm.

Other industries have been established in Revelstoke from time to time, but none has offered continuous steady employment or profit to Revelstoke's residents. Brick-making and agriculture have provided some jobs, but neither is likely ever to flourish in the Revelstoke - Big Bend area. The logical substitute for the railway as a field of employment for Revelstoke's population in the past (and probably in the future) has been the logging industry. The timber resources of the region are large, and may help to ease the threatened loss to Revelstoke of the railway payrolls.

43 Revelstoke Observer, May 21, 1909.

Chapter Seven

The townsite dispute, incorporation and civic affairs

Revelstoke was not incorporated as a city until 1899. Other localities in the Kootenays, smaller than Revelstoke, were incorporated much earlier than 1899, but they did not have to face a problem peculiar to Revelstoke. Under the Terms of Union of 1871, British Columbia agreed to transfer to Canada a strip of land extending back twenty miles on both sides of the railway route when such a route had been determined. By 1883, the Canadian Government had virtually decided upon the major lines which the tracks were to follow. By the so-called "Settlement Acts" of 1883 and 1884, the two governments arranged for the transfer to the federal government of the lands mentioned in the Terms of Union.¹ Prior to 1884, however, the basis had been established for a legal fight which was to plague Revelstoke for the following fifteen years, and to cause the inhabitants considerable confusion and hardship. For this muddle, one man, Arthur Stanhope Farwell, is mainly responsible.

A.S. Farwell² was born in England in 1841, and in 1862 came to British Columbia. As a surveyor he held responsible

1 British Columbia, Statutes, 1883, c. 14, 1884, c. 14; Canada, Statutes, 1884, c. 6.

2 For biographical information on Farwell, consult the Nelson Daily News, July 30, 1908. British Columbia's Provincial Archives has some of Farwell's diaries and account books which, unfortunately, Farwell kept in his own peculiar shorthand, and which, therefore, are virtually incomprehensible.

governmental positions in British Columbia prior to, and after, 1871. He had taken part in the work of surveying the route of the proposed railway, visiting the Revelstoke and Big Bend region, and had noticed the possibilities of a fine townsite on the east bank of the Columbia River opposite the entrance to Eagle Pass.³ On October 20, 1883, he made an application to the provincial government for a grant of land covering Lot 6, Block I, Kootenay District, the area upon which Revelstoke now stands.⁴ At the time of Farwell's application, there was no public indication that his grant would be in the railway belt, although Farwell, a surveyor by profession, had shrewdly guessed that the railway would have to follow a route which would cut through his land grant. On January 13, 1885, the province issued to Farwell the title to his Crown Grant, 1,175 acres in all, at the same time issuing similar Crown Grants in the area to ten other people.⁵ In the meantime, Farwell had partly laid out his townsite, making allowances for future residential, industrial and transportation areas, and changing the name from Columbia City (the site was also known as Big Eddy and Second Crossing) to Farwell. His hopes for the future town were high. He believed that it would be a centre of trade with the United States, a manufacturing city, the administrative headquarters

3 Victoria Colonist, February 12, 1885.

4 British Columbia, Department of the Provincial Secretary, British Columbia Gazette, Victoria, Queen's Printer, 1883, p. 414.

5 British Columbia, Legislative Assembly, Sessional papers, Victoria, Queen's Printer, 1897, p. 993.

for the surrounding district, a tourist resort, and, finally, a lumbering and mining centre.⁶

In October, 1885, the federal government dampened Farwell's enthusiasm by notifying him that, according to the terms of the Act of 1883, his land grant was federal property because the province had transferred the land to the Dominion as part of the lands of the railway belt.⁷ On behalf of himself and the other grantees, Farwell contested the view of the federal government, taking the case to the Supreme Court of Canada. For eleven years the ownership of the land was in doubt. Farwell had registered his title to the land in the Provincial Land Registry Office, and, accordingly, blocked the issue by the province of any certificate of title to any other applicant for the land since the Registrar-General of British Columbia naturally refused to issue two titles for any one property. The Canadian Government further complicated matters by issuing Crown Grants to various companies and groups, grants which, of course, the Provincial Registrar-General could not recognize. The matter was taken up again and again in the provincial

6 Victoria Colonist, February 12, 1885.

7 For the full legal details of the townsite question, see: Cameron, E.R., ed., Notes and annotations upon the reports of the judgments of the Supreme Court of Canada, Toronto, Butterworth, 1927, pp. 553-562; and, Canada, Supreme Court, Reports of the Supreme Court of Canada, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1888, pp. 345-428, and 1894, pp. 259-264.

legislature and the federal parliament, as well as by governmental departments and the people of Revelstoke.⁸ Almost no resident of Revelstoke could be sure that the land on which his buildings stood was legally his. Merchants and financial institutions were chary of building permanent quarters in the town. Real estate agents could sell nothing with any degree of certainty of making their sales endure. The only advantage of the dispute to the townspeople was the freedom of the contested land grants from taxation.

In February, 1894, the Supreme Court of Canada decided against Farwell,⁹ but early in 1895 the provincial and federal governments and Farwell reached an amicable agreement by which the title to the original Crown Grant received by Farwell was confirmed and Farwell's township rights were established.¹⁰ Farwell agreed to surrender his original provincial title, and, in return, to accept a federal grant.

By 1895, however, there were six groups of people claiming land in Revelstoke: the ordinary residents, having homes and business establishments scattered from the Illecillewaet to the Big Eddy; the Kootenay Smelting Company, with 320 acres; the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, with approximately forty acres;

8 For some examples of the way in which the two governments dealt with the townsite question, consult the entries for March 28, 1889, February 15, 1892, and March 1, 1893 in: British Columbia, Legislative Assembly, Journals of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, Victoria, Queen's Printer, 1889, 1892 and 1893; Revelstoke Kootenay Star, August 2, 1890, January 9, February 6, 1892, and March 4 and 11, 1893; and Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, July 28, 1894.

9 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, February 26, 1894; Cameron, op. cit., p. 554.

10 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, April 13, 1895.

J.A. Mara, with about one hundred acres held on his own behalf, and another twenty acres held for the Columbia and Kootenay Steam Navigation Company; and A.S. Farwell and his associates, with 1,175 acres.¹¹ To allow these people and groups some protection, Farwell surrendered his title, and, in return, received back a federal title which included all his original grant except those portions already granted by the federal government to the other grantees. The transfer, however, was a laborious process, and caused the property owners of Revelstoke in 1897 to threaten to refuse to pay any taxes until they could secure the registration of their title deeds.¹² Whether or not this threat was responsible, a final settlement of the vexatious townsite question was made on June 12, 1897.¹³ Revelstoke could now look forward confidently to the next step in its development, incorporation as a city.

The first indication of a desire on the part of the inhabitants of the Revelstoke area for incorporation of the town as a city appeared in June, 1885, when twenty-nine residents of the town of Farwell petitioned the provincial cabinet for

11 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, December 14, 1895.

12 Ibid., June 5, 1897.

13 A.S. Farwell moved to Nelson in 1898, and died there in 1908. Nelson Daily News, July 30, 1908.

the incorporation of Farwell as a city.¹⁴ That petition was the beginning of a movement for incorporation which was to succeed fourteen years later.

In September, 1894, the Kootenay Mail urged the townspeople to consider the advantages of controlling their own civic destinies: in 1894 the townsite dispute seemed almost over; Revelstoke badly needed its own waterworks, electrical supply and other public utilities, the money for which could best be borrowed on the financial security offered by an incorporated city; and, finally, incorporation in 1894 would allow the inclusion of all the lands lying between the Big Eddy and the Illecillewaet in the proposed city limits, an area which the Mail hoped would be contained in the new city.¹⁵ Despite the editorial, the question of incorporation lay dormant until 1897 when the problem suddenly attracted public attention. In February, 1897, J.M. Kellie wrote to ask his Revelstoke constituents if they wished to have their town included in a proposed bill before the provincial legislature to incorporate Rossland and Nelson as cities.¹⁶ The townspeople discussed the matter and rejected the proposal, the majority declaring it premature.¹⁷ In August, 1897, a meeting called to discuss incorporation resulted in the formation of a committee to investigate the matter and to report on its findings.¹⁸ In

14 Farwell, A.S., to John Robson, June 27, 1885.

15 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, September 1, 1894.

16 Revelstoke Herald, February 22, 1897.

17 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, February 27, 1897.

18 Ibid., August 21, 1897.

November the report of the group advised that incorporation would be in the best financial interests of the town, the estimated annual income of the future city supposedly being greater than the amount which the town received annually from the provincial and federal governments in the form of local improvements.¹⁹ In January, 1898, the residents petitioned the provincial legislature for incorporation.²⁰ A bill providing for the future incorporation of Revelstoke was subsequently introduced and passed by the legislature in 1898.²¹

In the midst of the steps of securing civic status for Revelstoke, a serious problem suddenly arose, and delayed the process for approximately a year. For years the Columbia River had been eating away at its banks at Revelstoke. The eddies and whirlpools resulting from the construction of railway and traffic bridges accelerated the process of erosion. The river began to threaten much of the Revelstoke townsite. By 1898 erosion had become a major problem. The responsibility for the protection of the river bank was in doubt, both the provincial and federal governments claiming the other to be responsible for the protection of the valuable property annually being washed away.²² Some Revelstoke people, including the proprietors of

19 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, November 13, 1897.

20 British Columbia, Legislative Assembly, Clerk of the House, Papers, 1898.

21 British Columbia, Statutes, 1898, c. 39.

22 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, May 7, 1898.

the Kootenay Mail²³ and J.M. Kellie,²⁴ now believed that incorporation should be delayed until the onus of river-bank protection definitely had been assumed by either the provincial or federal governments. The new city should not have to undertake the expensive task of combatting erosion. The Revelstoke Herald supported those who favoured immediate incorporation.²⁵ The dispute between the two groups was a fierce one, but eventually the people who favoured immediate incorporation won. In 1899, after the passing of another Act which slightly modified the Act of 1898,²⁶ the provincial cabinet utilized the power given it by the Act of 1898, and declared Revelstoke a city, as of March 1, 1899.²⁷

The provincial government appointed Fred Fraser as the Returning Officer for Revelstoke's first civic election, with the power of drawing up the voters' lists. On March 22, Revelstoke's voters elected F. McCarty as their first Mayor, and W.M. Brown, W.F. Crage, T.J. Graham, T. Kilpatrick, Dr. W.B. McKechnie and F.B. Wells as their first Alderman.²⁸ On March 25, in the Court House, the City Council held its first meeting, and carried out certain necessary preliminaries, appointing Dr.

23 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, May 7, 1898.
 24 Ibid., January 7, 1899.
 25 Loc. cit.
 26 British Columbia, Statutes, 1899, c. 64.
 27 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, March 4, 1899.
 28 The defeated candidates in the first civic election included J. Abrahamson, H.A. Brown, W.J. Lee, T. Lewis, J. McMahon and W.A. Nettle for Aldermen, and T.L. Haig for Mayor. Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, March 25, 1899.

McKechnie as Secretary of the Council, pro tem., and arranging to ask for applications for the permanent positions in the new civic structure.²⁹ The city's first officers included Alderman W.M. Brown and T.E.L. Taylor as Police Commissioners; Alderman F.B. Wells and C.F. Lindmark as Licence Commissioners; T.L. Haig as Police Magistrate; C.E. Shaw as City Clerk; Dr. J.W. Cross as City Health Officer; and G.S. McCarter as City Solicitor.³⁰ In 1899 the first Council undertook the necessary steps towards civic improvements, borrowing \$15,000 for general expenses, and utilizing the money for streets and other essential services.³¹

It is impossible, of course, to list all the notable events and personalities in Revelstoke's civic development.³² Among the outstanding members of Revelstoke's City Councils, however, have been H.F. McKinnon, elected Mayor ten times, and Walter Hardman, Mayor of Revelstoke from 1937 to the present time.³³ Mayor Hardman has been Revelstoke's chief official longer than any of his predecessors. Prominent among Revelstoke's activities

29 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, March 25, 1899.

30 Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940; Vancouver Province, March 31, 1934.

31 Revelstoke Observer, May 21, 1909.

32 A statistical review of the finances of Revelstoke during the first ten years of civic existence is to be found in the Revelstoke Observer, May 21, 1909. See also: Revelstoke, City of Revelstoke financial statements, 1916-1947, Revelstoke, n.p., 1916-1947, 32 vols.

33 For a complete list of the Mayors of Revelstoke from 1899 to 1954 see Appendix I.

as a city have been the financial contribution in 1901 towards the establishment of a steamer service on the Columbia River above Revelstoke; the acquisition by the city of a privately owned water and light plant in 1902; the contribution in 1908 towards a fire-alarm system for the city; and, probably most remembered of all, the construction of a new City and Fire Hall in 1938 and 1939 at a cost of approximately \$39,000.

The new building was officially opened on April 1, 1939, and is one of the finest city halls of its size in the province.

Chapter Eight

The development of public services

In any established community there are certain necessary aspects of life which may be classified under the general heading of "public services." Some of these activities, for example, police and fire protection, are provided for by public funds. Others, such as the operations of chartered banks and Boards of Trade are privately conducted but actually perform a great service for the general public. Hospitals, too, are essential in a city. Another group of services, the provision of water, light, power and telephone facilities, are also of concern to the public. The development of these "public services" in Revelstoke is an important part of the community's history.

When the main rush to the Big Bend took place in 1865 and 1866, the first representatives of law and order in the area were appointed by the officials of the Crown Colony of British Columbia. In October, 1865, the government instructed Walter Moberly, then conducting explorations for a wagon road, to act as Gold Commissioner on the Columbia River.¹ Moberly did so for a short time, and then, wishing to return to New Westminster to make his report on his survey work, transferred the work of

¹ British Columbia, Department of Lands and Works, Columbia River exploration, 1865, New Westminster, Government Printing Office, 1866, p. 7.

the Gold Commissioner's office to Robert T. Smith, and authorized Smith to issue mining certificates and to record claims.² The first resident Gold Commissioner, and the first representative of law and order in the Big Bend, however, were not to arrive at French Creek until May, 1866.

In February, 1865, Peter O'Reilly became Gold Commissioner and Magistrate for the Kootenay district,³ and in March, 1866, he received the additional appointment of Gold Commissioner for an area loosely designated as "Columbia," with headquarters at French Creek.⁴ He also received the blessings of the government, and an allowance of \$250 for the purchase of leg irons, handcuffs and a safe.⁵ In March, 1866, also, Governor Frederick Seymour appointed A.W. Vowell⁶ as constable under O'Reilly at French Creek. On April 7, Vowell left New Westminster for Yale in the S.S. Reliance, and on April 11, O'Reilly followed. In May, 1866, both O'Reilly and Vowell arrived at French Creek.

An inspection of O'Reilly's itinerary for the seven months from April 11 to November 12, 1866, offers some indication of the strenuous life of a Gold Commissioner.⁷ From Yale, O'Reilly

2 Columbia River exploration, 1865, p. 7.

3 Victoria Colonist, February 4, 1865.

4 Ibid., March 8, 1866.

5 For some details on O'Reilly's appointment, see: Victoria Colonist, June 27, 1948.

6 Victoria Colonist, September 27, 1918.

7 O'Reilly, Peter, Diary, 1866, MS, Archives of B.C.

went by wagon to Fort Kamloops, the Hudson's Bay Company's post, where he found that over five hundred men bound for the Big Bend had already preceded him. He went on to Seymour Arm by canoe, and then walked over the divide to the Columbia. On May 2, he arrived at Goldstream. From there he visited the various camps at McCulloch Creek, French Creek and Wilson's Landing, issuing mining licences, recording claims and performing other official duties. He established his headquarters at French Creek. On May 22, he heard the news of the unfortunate loss by drowning of seventeen lives at Death Rapids on May 19. On June 1, J.C. Haynes arrived at French Creek to relieve O'Reilly while the latter visited Wild Horse Creek. In July, O'Reilly went by horseback and boat to the Little Dalles where he found Captain Leonard White and the S.S. Forty-Nine. He went through the Arrow Lakes on the steamer, and then set out eastward on horseback to Wild Horse. By September 13, he was back at Seymour. On September 24 he issued writs for the election of a Member to the Legislative Council, and on October 11, 12, 22 and 25 conducted polls at McCulloch Creek, French Creek, Seymour and La Porte respectively. By November 1, he was at Seymour, and on November 12 he was back at New Westminster. His connection with the Big Bend as a Gold Commissioner was

ended.⁸

Shortly after O'Reilly left the Big Bend in 1866, the gold rush ended, and almost all of the miners left the area. For the next fifteen years there was little need for men to enforce law and order in the Big Bend. A.W. Vowell remained in the region, at his headquarters at French Creek, and fulfilled all the duties required of him by the government, finally becoming Gold Commissioner for the Kootenay district in October, 1872.⁹ In 1873, he moved on to the Omineca district, and his duties and his headquarters were transferred to Cornelius Booth at Wild Horse Creek. Booth gradually assumed all the functions and offices of the government, and in June, 1876, became the Gold Commissioner and Stipendiary Magistrate for the whole of the Kootenay district, still maintaining his headquarters at Wild Horse.¹⁰ From 1873 to 1884, the Revelstoke

⁸ O'Reilly's career prior to, and after, his appointment to French Creek was a distinguished one. He was born in England in 1828, and in 1859, after spending eight years in an Irish police unit, had arrived in British Columbia. He served as Stipendiary Magistrate and Gold Commissioner in both the Kootenay and Omineca regions, as well as serving as a Member of the Legislative Council from 1864 to 1871. From 1867 to 1881 he was a County Court Judge for Yale district, and resigned that post to become Indian Commissioner for British Columbia. He died in 1905. Victoria Colonist, June 27, 1948; Kerr, J.B., Biographical dictionary of well-known British Columbians, Vancouver, Kerr and Begg, 1890, p. 195.

⁹ British Columbia, Department of the Provincial Secretary, British Columbia Gazette (hereafter referred to as B.C. Gazette), November 23, 1872, Victoria, Queen's Printer, 1872.

¹⁰ B.C. Gazette, March 4, 1873.

area, almost devoid of any population, was administered by various Gold Commissioners and Government Agents at Wild Horse. With the approach of the railway through the mountains in 1884 and 1885, however, the Gold Commissioner at Wild Horse, once again A.W. Vowell, found the duties of his vast district too heavy to be administered by one man from such a distance.

Because of the railway construction, the region around Eagle Pass, Farwell and Donald suddenly became the busiest and most populous area on the mainland of British Columbia, and yet had virtually no provision for the maintenance of law and order. In 1884 and 1885 the provincial and federal governments and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company were facing a serious problem, the confusion and disorder caused by the illegal sale of imported and locally-distilled liquor to the construction crews of the railway company.¹¹ In January, 1884, the provincial government appointed George Hope Johnston as a Justice of the Peace for the Kootenay district to combat the disorder, and in April of the same year commissioned Stephen Redgrave as a sheriff and constable to aid in the suppression of the liquor traffic. The illegal sale of alcohol continued, however, and the railway company finally asked the federal government to police the mountain section of the railway route. Inspector S.B. Steele of the Royal North West Mounted Police investigated, and discovered that the alcohol problem was not so much an illegal one as it was one of a different interpretation of the law by the officials of the federal and provincial

¹¹ A clear statement of the police problems of the railway construction camps is to be found in: Turner, J.P., The North-West Mounted Police, 1873-1893, Ottawa, King's Printer, 1950, vol. 2, passim.

governments. The federal government was enacting laws making the sale of liquor illegal in the railway belt, while the provincial government was issuing licences to any one who wished to sell alcohol. Early in 1885 a small detachment of Royal North West Mounted Police established itself at Farwell, building a barracks and jail. From Eagle Pass westward along the railway belt, Charles Todd, a Stipendiary Magistrate, administered justice.¹² East of Farwell, where there were virtually no local justices, the federal police, supervised by Inspector Steele, had charge.¹³ In 1885, however, the unsettled conditions in what is now the province of Saskatchewan led the federal government to withdraw Steele and his men from the mountain section of railway construction to aid in the suppression of the uprising of the followers of Louis Riel. Steele named George Hope Johnston as a special Commissioner of Police to act as his deputy during his absence, with a group of special constables, not regular officers of the federal police force, to enforce the law.

In April, 1885, the provincial government had ordered Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, as Stipendiary Magistrate, and John Kirkup, as Chief Constable of the Kootenay district, to Farwell. Sproat was a dominant figure in Farwell for the next five years - the years during which most of the prominent pioneers

12 Victoria Colonist, April 23, 1885.

13 Loc. cit.

arrived in the town.¹⁴ When he arrived in Farwell in May, 1885, he found that Commissioner Johnston and his men were attempting to enforce the federal law against selling alcohol in the railway belt.¹⁵ Sproat, as the Stipendiary Magistrate appointed to uphold the law, favoured the provincial regulations which permitted the issuing of licences to people wishing to sell liquor. In June and July, 1885, each of the two groups representing law and order tried to enforce the laws as it interpreted them, and each gradually alienated the other. The construction workers, of course, supported Sproat and the provincial authorities, and referred angrily to the federal special police as "Johnston's Cossacks" and the "Kootenay Jayhawkers."¹⁶ In August and September the whole trouble came to a head when one of Johnston's men arrested a man caught in the act of bringing in a load of liquor into the railway belt by pack train.¹⁷ From this spark arose the infamous "police war" at Farwell.

The incident of the "police war" has been so coloured by frequent re-telling that it is almost an anti-climax to try

14 Sproat was born in Scotland in 1834, and came to British Columbia in 1860 as a special agent for a British shipping firm. In 1863 he first became involved in an administrative position in the services of the Crown Colony of Vancouver Island, and in 1871 became the first Agent-General for the province in London. See Rickard, T.A., "Gilbert Malcolm Sproat," British Columbia Historical Quarterly, vol. 1 (January, 1937), pp. 21-32.

15 Turner, op. cit., pp. 241-242.

16 Victoria Colonist, June 19, September 25, 1885.

17 Turner, op. cit., pp. 241-242.

to tell what actually happened. When Johnston's deputy arrested the man bringing in the liquor, the prisoner complained to Sproat against being punished for an act which was quite legal according to provincial laws.¹⁸ Sproat then issued a warrant for the arrest of the federal special constable, and sent a provincial constable to effect the arrest. The federal constables, however, arrested the provincial constable, and, after a brief "trial," sentenced him to jail for a few days for interfering with the duties of the special constable. The federal officers subsequently arrested another provincial officer sent to arrest them. Sproat then issued a warrant for the arrest of Johnston, and swore in twenty men as special provincial police officers to arrest him. They captured Johnston and two of his followers. The remaining federal police officers barricaded themselves in their quarters, and prepared to defend themselves against an attack by Sproat and his special police. Several days later most of the federal constables left Farwell, and Sproat and his men took complete charge of the town.¹⁹ Police Commissioner Johnston also left Farwell after his release on bail. On September 23, 1885, Sproat and Colonel J.F. McLeod, an ex-Commissioner of Police sent by the federal government from the McLeod district to investigate the matter, jointly

¹⁸ Turner, op. cit., pp. 241-242. Contemporary reaction to the "police war" is to be found in: Victoria Colonist, March 12, June 19, July 3, September 5, 6, 9, 10 and 25, 1885.

¹⁹ Victoria Colonist, September 5 and 25, 1885.

presided at a trial to examine the whole fracas. They decided that, on the whole, Johnston and the special constables of the federal government, through inexperience and ignorance of their duties, had been basically at fault.²⁰ After disciplining the offenders, Sproat and McLeod reached an agreement on the future policing of the area, with its thousands of construction workers.²¹ Inspector Steele later returned to Farwell to preserve order.²² He made his headquarters at Farwell until 1886, while another detachment of federal officers at Donald maintained the peace on the section from Donald to Rogers Pass.²³ After the completion of the work of the construction crews, the federal police were withdrawn from British Columbia, and did not return for sixty-five years.

G.M. Sproat was appointed Gold Commissioner at Farwell in July, 1886, when the Kootenay district was subdivided, and thus, aided by his Chief Constable, John Kirkup, became the chief representative of the provincial government in the region.²⁴ He remained as Gold Commissioner and Stipendiary Magistrate until July, 1889, when he was succeeded by George Christie Tunstall.²⁵ After 1889, Sproat and A.S. Farwell attended jointly

20 Victoria Colonist, October 3, 1885.

21 Loc. cit.

22 Turner, op. cit., p. 242.

23 Ibid p. 270.

24 B.C. Gazette, July 16, 1886.

25 Ibid., July 4, 1889.

to their considerable real estate holdings in the Kootenay area. He died in Victoria in June, 1913.

Except for a brief period spent at Sproat's Landing in 1890, John Kirkup remained as Chief Constable in the Revelstoke region until 1894, also becoming Recorder, Assessor and Collector for the provincial government. In 1894, after fifteen years of service as a police officer, Kirkup resigned from the police force, and returned to private life.²⁶

A man noted more for his exploits as the Gold Commissioner in the early days of the Atlin gold rush than for his activities in Revelstoke, Joseph Dee Graham succeeded John Kirkup as Chief Constable in April, 1894.²⁷ In July, 1895, Graham also became Gold Commissioner for the district.²⁸ In 1895 and 1896 the increased mining activity in the region around Revelstoke led to an increase in Graham's police staff.²⁹ Graham remained as Chief Constable until the end of 1896 when he was succeeded by J.D. Sibbald.³⁰

When Revelstoke became a city in 1899, Thomas Livingstone Haig became the first Police Magistrate for the city, and W.M. Brown and T.E.L. Taylor became the first Police Commissioners.³¹

26 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, April 24, 1894.

27 Ibid., April 28, 1894.

28 British Columbia, Department of the Attorney-General, Report of the Commissioner of Provincial Police, 1895 (hereafter referred to as B.C., Attorney-General, Police report), Victoria, Queen's Printer, 1896, pp. 889, 892 and 902.

29 B.C., Attorney-General, Police report, 1896, p. 915.

30 B.C., Attorney-General, Police report, 1897, p. 673.

31 Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

On July 1, 1899, A. McRae began policing the city of Revelstoke.³² Revelstoke maintained its own municipal police force until 1932, when, under the authority of an Act passed by the provincial legislature in 1924, the city and the provincial police force entered into an agreement by which the latter assumed the task of policing the city in exchange for a certain annual sum from the city.³³ In August, 1950, the most recent change in Revelstoke's policing occurred as a result of the amalgamation of the provincial police force with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.³⁴ Today the federal police force administers law and order in Revelstoke.

Only one more aspect of the maintenance of law and order in the Revelstoke region - the establishment of courts and a court house - remains to be considered. The first assize held at Farwell took place on June 23, 1885, when Sir Matthew Baillie Begbie, the Chief Justice of British Columbia, presided at the Kootenay Court of Assize, and Paulus Aemilius Irving, then Deputy Attorney-General and later to become a Justice of the Supreme Court of British Columbia, acted as the Crown Prosecutor in a murder case.³⁵ Despite subsequent, persistent

32 Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

33 B.C., Attorney General, Police report, 1932, pp. 4, 8 and 37.

34 Victoria Colonist, August 15, 1950.

35 Kamloops Inland Sentinel, July 2, 1885.

agitation by Revelstoke's townspeople and newspapers, Revelstoke did not have a proper court room until October 6, 1897, when Judge J.A. Forin presided at the opening of the Revelstoke Court House.³⁶ The court house served as the central headquarters for all the provincial officials in Revelstoke until 1913, when a new building to house the court officials and other officers and offices of the province in Revelstoke was completed.³⁷

The town of Revelstoke secured water, electrical and telephone services early in its existence. In 1888 William Cowan unsuccessfully launched his first of several plans to interest his fellow-townsmen in securing an adequate water supply for the community.³⁸ In the succeeding years, Cowan and others originated schemes, sought subscriptions, applied for charters of incorporation and arranged public meetings in Revelstoke.³⁹ In January, 1895, the Kootenay Mail printed a letter from E. Picard, a merchant in Revelstoke, in which Picard offered to furnish the town with a water supply for domestic purposes, and to operate the water system after its construction.⁴⁰

36 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, October 9, 1897.

37 British Columbia, Department of Finance, Estimates of the revenue and expenditure of the province of British Columbia, 1912-1913, Victoria, King's Printer, 1913, p. E31.

38 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, November 28, 1891.

39 Ibid., September 13, October 4 and 11, 1890; January 3, 1891.

40 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, January 5, 1895.

Picard's plan was allowed to drop, but it did serve the purpose of renewing interest in the question of a water supply. In August, 1896, A.E. Cummins, a civil engineer, conducted a survey for the installation of a water system for Revelstoke,⁴¹ and in September the Kootenay Mail announced that William Cowan, W.M. Brown and J. Abrahamson had become the provisional directors of a new company, the Revelstoke Water, Light and Power Company, which was applying to the provincial legislature for an Act of Incorporation.⁴² By September 14, 1896, Charles Holten was superintending the construction of the waterworks system. The work was rushed, and on November 14, 1896, the water was turned on for the first time.⁴³

In June, 1897, the Revelstoke Water, Light and Power Company announced that it would extend its water system to all parts of the town, and would enlarge its facilities to give a greater service than before to the customers.⁴⁴ Between June, 1897, and October 1, 1902, when the City of Revelstoke acquired the holdings of the Revelstoke Water, Light and Power Company, the company expanded its waterworks facilities to serve all sections of Revelstoke.

An electric light and power project was also proposed by William Cowan in 1888.⁴⁵ Its progress, too, was slow. On

41 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, August 1, 1896.

42 Ibid., September 5, 1896.

43 Ibid., November 21, 1896.

44 Ibid., June 19, 1897.

45 Ibid., January 1, 1898.

August 4, 1894, "Diogenes," a columnist for the Kootenay Mail, reported that he had heard people talking about an electric light plant for Revelstoke, and commented favourably on the rumour.⁴⁶ "Diogenes" was perhaps disappointed, but most of the other residents of Revelstoke were delighted when, in December, 1894, eleven oil-burning lamps for street-lighting purposes arrived in Revelstoke from Montreal. On December 19, 1894, the lamps went on, for the first time, on Front Street. The Kootenay Mail later recorded that many people took a stroll along Front Street on that evening to take advantage of the novelty.⁴⁷

When Cowan, Abrahamson and Brown applied to the provincial government in 1896 to incorporate their company, they sought a franchise to supply electric light and power as well as water. By March 1, 1897, they had received the permission which they had requested.⁴⁸ In August the company let contracts for the supplying of the necessary machinery and wires, and began the project.⁴⁹ On February 23, 1898, the electric lights were tested for the first time in Revelstoke, and, on February 26, were in full operation.⁵⁰ Electric street lighting soon followed.

46 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, August 4, 1894.

47 Ibid., December 22, 1894.

48 Ibid., May 1, 1897.

49 Ibid., August 7, 1897.

50 Ibid., February 26, 1898.

By December, 1898, all aspects of the power project were completed.

After Revelstoke was incorporated as a city in 1899, suggestions arose that the city should acquire the ownership of the waterworks, the water rights, the power plant and the privileges of the Revelstoke Water, Light and Power Company.⁵¹ In April, 1900, the City Council took up the proposals, but for two years was unable to achieve the desired result. On March 20, 1901, the Council submitted a bye-law to the ratepayers of Revelstoke on the question of buying the utility company's holdings.⁵² The bye-law passed, but the scheme dragged on. In May, 1902, the Council commissioned H.B. Smith, a civil engineer, to report on the value and condition of the waterworks and power plant.⁵³ Following Smith's report, the Council submitted another bye-law to the citizens of Revelstoke on September 17, 1902, and, upon its approval, arranged to buy the holdings of the company for \$62,500.⁵⁴ On October 1, 1902, the city officially acquired all of the property of the utility company. The Kootenay Mail enthusiastically commented:

The city is to be congratulated on having in office this year the best mayor **and council** it has ever had. Splendid work has been done for the city in the acquisition of the water and light plant....⁵⁵

51 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, April 24, 1900.

52 Ibid., March 8, 1901.

53 Ibid., July 11, 1902.

54 Ibid., September 19, 1902.

55 Ibid., October 2, 1902.

In subsequent years Revelstoke expanded and improved its waterworks and light plant to meet the growing needs of the city and district. Today Revelstoke still owns its own utility company.

In 1890 William Cowan installed a system of telephones in his Victoria Hotel, and connected his lines with the railway station.⁵⁶ Cowan gradually expanded his system to meet the growing demands of the residents. For six years he charged no tolls for the use of the telephone system, treating the line merely as an adjunct to his hotel business, but finally, in January, 1896, he began to operate the telephone system on a commercial basis.⁵⁷ At the same time, he commenced a rapid expansion of the telephone system's facilities. In May, 1897, he secured a charter from the provincial legislature for the incorporation of his telephone company under the name of the Revelstoke, Trout Lake and Big Bend Telephone Company, Limited, to service Revelstoke, Illecillewaet, Trout Lake and the Big Bend.⁵⁸ The telephone venture was a financial success for Cowan, and became an integral part of the business and personal lives of the citizens of Revelstoke. On June 12, 1925, the company increased its capital, and on September 21 of that

56 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, November 8, 1890.

57 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, January 25, 1896.

58 British Columbia, Statutes, 1897, c. 69.

year changed its name to that of the Solar Telephone Company.⁵⁹
In June, 1951, the Solar Telephone Company went into liquidation.⁶⁰
Today, Revelstoke is served by the Revelstoke Exchange of the
Okanagan Telephone Company.⁶¹

In the early history of Revelstoke's public utilities, one man, William Cowan, stands foremost. Between 1888 and 1896 he kept the waterworks and power questions before the public, and was successful in financing and building his projects. In addition, he laid the foundations of a telephone service which did much to knit together the scattered sections of pioneer Revelstoke.

One of the most dreaded experiences of every community, big or small, is a fire. Revelstoke has had serious fires which have destroyed valuable property and, on occasion, caused the loss of lives, but the community has seldom experienced the type of disaster which, for example, time and again, almost totally destroyed Fernie in the early history of that centre of the Crowsnest Pass region.

Almost the first recorded fire in the Big Bend region occurred at Farwell early in May, 1885. The unusual dryness of the spring of that year caused many forest fires in the Kootenays. On May 7, 1885, one such bush fire, driven by a strong wind, suddenly besieged Farwell, and destroyed it in a

59 British Columbia, Department of the Attorney-General, Registrar of Companies, Files on: Revelstoke, Trout Lake and Big Bend Telephone Company, Ltd.; Trout Lake and Big Bend Telephone Company, Ltd.; Solar Telephone Company, Ltd; Okanagan Telephone Company: Victoria, B.C.

60 Loc. cit.

61 Loc. cit.

matter of hours, leaving intact only the federal police barracks.⁶²
By the end of May, however, the town was almost rebuilt.

In 1891, as a result of the request of the people of Revelstoke, the provincial government agreed to set aside annually the sum of \$250 for the purpose of fire-protection in Revelstoke.⁶³ Although the amount was small, only half of what the townspeople had requested, it was sufficient to spur the local residents to efforts for providing for some sort of safeguards against fire. In May, 1891, the Kootenay Star said, editorially, that fire wardens should be appointed or elected as soon as possible.⁶⁴ Gatherings of the townspeople to examine the matter had no results until March 26, 1892, when a meeting held to discuss the question of fire-protection led to the appointment of Revelstoke's first volunteer fire brigade, of which J.P. Sutherland was Fire Chief.⁶⁵ A committee instructed to inquire about the cost of a fire engine recommended the ordering of a chemical fire engine at a cost of \$700.⁶⁶ In July, a group of the town's business men signed a guarantee for the payment within twelve months of the unpaid balance of \$350 on the purchase price of the machine.⁶⁷

62 Kamloops Inland Sentinel, May 14, 1885.

63 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, May 16, 1891.

64 Ibid., May 23, 1891.

65 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, March 26, 1892.

66 Ibid., June 11, 1892.

67 Ibid., July 2, 1892.

The matter of a fire engine and brigade, however, dragged on for some months, complicated by the protests of the people in the station townsite against the apparent monopoly by the lower town of the governmental grant.⁶⁸ These people threatened to raise their own company of volunteers to handle fires.

On August 11, 1892, at a meeting of the townspeople, C.H. Allen was authorized to order the fire engine from the manufacturing company.⁶⁹ In December, Allen received word that the engine was ready for shipment. In December, also, W.M. Brown was elected the new Captain of the fire brigade. The dispute between the station and lower towns was settled temporarily by an agreement to use the new engine for fire-fighting in both sections of the community.

On January 10, 1893, the chemical fire engine, complete with one hundred feet of hose, a book of instructions, a crow-bar and the name "Revelstoke" inscribed in silver lettering on the red background of the engine, arrived from Toronto.⁷⁰ Only two factors remained to cloud the picture: the company had forgotten to send the chemical fluid necessary to operate the machine, and the fire engine would not fit into its new hall. Not until the fire-dousing chemical arrived did the

68 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, July 23, 1892.

69 Ibid., August 13, 1892.

70 Ibid., January 14, 1893.

fire brigade have a real practice. On April 17, the fire engine was "charged," and, after considerable confusion, trial and error, proved itself at a synthetic fire. The brigade and engine had their first fire-fighting experience on July 15, 1893, when an old building on Front Street caught fire. Although the building was completely destroyed, the brigade and engine did creditable work.⁷¹

In October, 1897, dissatisfaction with the existing fire protection caused the residents of the station townsite to form their own fire brigade.⁷² The existing brigade became known as Number One Fire Brigade, and the new group as Number Two Fire Brigade. A dividing line was established between the two towns. The Captain of Number One Brigade directed operations against fires west of the line, and the Captain of Number Two Brigade was in command against fires east of the line. Number Two Brigade secured about twenty volunteers, raised funds for fire equipment, and constructed its own hall. On May 11, 1898, the new brigade had its first fire-fighting experience, a brush fire, and was a success.

Revelstoke's two fire brigades served the town well until they were amalgamated. Since then Revelstoke's firemen and equipment have given the city good fire protection. Today Revelstoke has modern fire trucks and equipment, and an efficient Gamewell fire-alarm system.

71 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, July 19, 1893.

72 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, October 23, 1897.

One of the necessary institutions for which Revelstoke struggled for some time was a properly-equipped hospital to cope with the many accidents resulting from the dangerous occupations of railroading, mining and logging. For some years, however, the ill and injured of Revelstoke had to be transported to Kamloops or Golden for hospital treatment. One of the first people to advocate a hospital for Revelstoke was Dr. E.H.S. McLean. Dr. McLean received the appointment of Health Officer for the Electoral District of West Kootenay in November, 1892.⁷³ In February, 1894, Dr. McLean and William Brown organized a meeting of Revelstoke's business men to discuss the question of a hospital for the town.⁷⁴ The meeting resulted in a committee which was instructed to approach the provincial government for a grant. At the same time, the committee canvassed the townspeople for subscriptions, and secured pledges of over \$1,000 towards the project. Unfortunately, the provincial government had no appropriation for the hospital, and the scheme collapsed.⁷⁵

In June, 1897, Dr. W.B. McKechnie and his partner, Dr. F.W. Jeffs, began operating a private institution known as the Revelstoke Hospital.⁷⁶ From the inception of the hospital, the institution was handicapped by lack of space. It could accommodate only fifteen patients at a time. It was, nevertheless, a beginning. In September, 1897, the Canadian Pacific Railway Company,

73 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, November 26, 1892.

74 Ibid., February 26, 1894.

75 Ibid., March 10, 1894.

76 Revelstoke Herald, June 26, 1897.

as part of its programme of moving its holdings from Donald to Revelstoke, entered into an agreement with Dr. McKechnie by which the company agreed eventually to close its hospital at Donald, and to send all of its injured employees to the Revelstoke Hospital for treatment.⁷⁷

By 1899, Revelstoke had several doctors and nurses. In May, 1897, Dr. C.H.R. Pentreath came to assist Dr. McLean, and in February, 1898, Dr. J.O.W. Mallock joined the growing list of practitioners. In September, 1899, Dr. J.F. Carruthers also arrived in Revelstoke. In April, 1899, after Revelstoke's incorporation, the City Council appointed Dr. J.W. Cross, a surgeon for the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, to the post of City Health Officer (Revelstoke's first such official.)⁷⁸ Dr. Cross held the post until August, 1901, when he was succeeded by Dr. Carruthers.

By the end of 1899, the Revelstoke Hospital had clearly proved itself too small for the needs of the young city. In May, 1900, on the occasion of the sitting of the Assize Court in Revelstoke, a Grand Jury presented to Justice P. Irving an address which stated:

Your jurors are...of opinion that some steps should be taken by the government in conjunction with the city of Revelstoke and the C.P.R. for the

77 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, September 11, 1897.

78 Ibid., April 8, 1899.

establishment at Revelstoke of a first-class hospital. Many hundred men are employed in dangerous work in the district and accidents are continually occurring and such an institution would be of great benefit to the public and be the means of saving life.⁷⁹

The provincial government, however, proved unsympathetic to the request for a hospital, and did nothing.

Editorials in both the Mail and the Herald during 1900 eventually incited the citizens to take definite action on the hospital matter. In March, 1901, a delegation from Revelstoke discussed with the provincial government the question of a hospital for Revelstoke.⁸⁰ The provincial government subsequently agreed to provide \$4,000 towards the cost of the proposed hospital.⁸¹ In March, 1901, the Revelstoke Hospital Society was officially incorporated. In May members of the Society met with a representative of the Victorian Order of Nurses, and in July B.R. Atkins, Secretary of the Society, was able to announce that the Victorian Order of Nurses and its auxiliary, the Victoria Cottage Hospital Fund, had subscribed \$1,500 towards a hospital for Revelstoke.⁸² In return, the hospital, when built, would be called the Queen Victoria Cottage Hospital, and would be operated under the regulations governing the Victorian Order of Nurses. In addition to the monies promised by the two private groups and by the government, the Ladies'

79 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, May 4, 1900.

80 Victoria Colonist, March 9, 1901.

81 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, August 9, 1901.

82 Ibid., July 19, 1901.

Auxiliary to the Hospital Society embarked on an energetic campaign to raise funds. The citizens of Revelstoke responded generously, and when the first annual meeting of the Revelstoke Hospital Society took place on August 5, 1901, Atkins was able to report that the Society had over \$8,000 promised from various sources.⁸³ As well as the hospital fund, money was also subscribed for an ambulance for Revelstoke, and on August 9, 1901, it arrived in the city. By August, 1902, the hospital was finished and ready for use.⁸⁴ The hospital, when completed, cost approximately \$12,000. In February, 1902, the Victorian Order of Nurses secured a District Nurse for Revelstoke.

In June, 1909, the Revelstoke Hospital Society decided to construct a new wing on the hospital, and finished the structure in 1910.⁸⁵ In 1912 O.W. Abrahamson obtained a contract for Revelstoke's present hospital, and completed the building at a cost of \$85,000. The new Queen Victoria Hospital was opened to the public on June 18, 1913.⁸⁶

An active organization in Revelstoke has been the Board of Trade. Prior to 1895 there had been several suggestions that the merchants of the town should form such an organization,⁸⁷ but not until July, 1895, was there any real response to the

⁸³ Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, August 9, 1901.

⁸⁴ Revelstoke Herald, August 14, 1902.

⁸⁵ Revelstoke Observer, July 2, 1902; Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

⁸⁶ Revelstoke Mail-Herald, June 19, 1913.

⁸⁷ Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, July 6, 1895.

suggestions. In July a meeting was held in the town to discuss the preliminary steps necessary to organize a Board of Trade. The meeting resulted in the election of C.E. Shaw as Secretary with instructions to secure the necessary powers of incorporation from the federal government.⁸⁸ On August 12, the Revelstoke Board of Trade, with thirty-three members, was officially established. J.M. Kellie, the Member of the Legislative Assembly, was the first president.⁸⁹ Kellie resigned as president almost immediately because he felt that his legislative duties would not permit him to give adequate attention to the affairs of the Board of Trade.⁹⁰ J.D. Sibbald and H.N. Coursier were then elected president and vice-president, respectively.⁹¹

In future years the Board of Trade worked energetically for Revelstoke's benefit, busying itself with the problem of the townsite dispute, the question of clearing the Columbia River above Revelstoke for navigation and of establishing a steamer service to the Big Bend, the subject of lower railway freight rates, and the fighting for the incorporation of Revelstoke.⁹² Today the Revelstoke Board of Trade is still carrying on vigorously,

88 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, July 13, 1895.

89 Ibid., August 17, 1895.

90 Ibid., September 21, 1895.

91 Loc. cit.

92 Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940; Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, September 21, 1895; Vancouver News Herald, June 14, 1943.

working for both the benefit of the community and of its members, and is one of the most energetic Boards of Trade in British Columbia.

One of the ways in which the townsite dispute harmed Revelstoke was the manner in which it barred banking services to the townspeople for several years. As early as December, 1891, the people of Revelstoke were asking why the Bank of British Columbia and the Bank of Montreal were both planning to open branches in Nelson but not in Revelstoke.⁹³ The answer to the question was plain; no reputable bank or commercial house would risk building quarters on lots to which the title deeds were in doubt. Although the business men of Revelstoke persisted in their efforts to persuade a bank to come to Revelstoke, they were unsuccessful until 1897 when it became possible for the banks to acquire safe titles to lots.⁹⁴ In February, 1897, the Imperial Bank, the first bank in Revelstoke, opened its doors.⁹⁵ In April, 1898, Revelstoke's second bank, Molson's, opened to the public.⁹⁶ Molson's Bank was absorbed by the Bank of Montreal in 1924,⁹⁷ and the branch of the Bank of Montreal in Revelstoke was eventually withdrawn and replaced by the Canadian Bank of

93 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, December 19, 1891.

94 Revelstoke Herald, February 6, 1897.

95 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, February 27, 1897.

96 Ibid., April 30, 1898.

97 Victoria Colonist, October 30, 1924.

Commerce. Today the Imperial Bank of Canada and the Canadian Bank of Commerce are serving the community.

Chapter Nine

Newspapers

A colourful and interesting aspect of Revelstoke's past is the story of the newspapers and the men who published and edited them. In the pioneering days of British Columbia newspaper men usually said what they thought, and often lived to regret their words. Quarrels between country newspapers were almost continuous. A town which was large enough to boast two papers inevitably found itself divided into two factions at the head of which would be arrayed the rival newspapers. These quarrels were often spontaneous. More often they probably were agreed to by the rival editors to boost circulations. In the days before the radio entered almost every home, the local newspaper was the only source of news, and, therefore, was a most valuable instrument for swaying the opinions of the people of the locality one way or another. Revelstoke was no exception.

The first hint of a newspaper in the Big Bend area appeared in December, 1865, when a rumour spread that the presses and equipment for a journal entitled the Big Bend Independent were bound for the region.¹ The paper was to be independent politically, and devoted to the general interests of the country. There is no further word as to whether or not the newspaper ever appeared.

¹ Victoria Colonist, December 9, 1865.

It is unlikely that it did. In April, 1885, it was reported that a small printing press for the Revelstoke Courier was expected to arrive in Revelstoke early that summer.² The Courier, too, apparently failed to appear.

The Revelstoke area's first paper of which there are actual copies in existence today is The Truth which probably first appeared on June 2, 1888, at Donald, then a divisional point on the Canadian Pacific Railway.³ The editor, John Houston, a colourful newspaper and political figure in the history of British Columbia, evidently had trouble with his printing press for he did not produce his second edition until June 30.⁴ The paper consisted of eight small pages full of local gossip and mining news. It was a weekly, appearing on Saturdays, and cost ten cents per copy. As an appeal to prospective subscribers, The Truth carried the following notice:

Birth Notices (simply to encourage a home industry) will be printed free, provided the child weighs over eight pounds; if twins, a bonus of \$5 will be granted the parents.⁵

The last issue of The Truth probably appeared about August, 1889.⁶ Houston moved to New Westminster to start The Truth afresh there in September, 1889,⁷ and eventually moved on to Nelson, beginning

2 Victoria Colonist, April 7, 1885.

3 Kamloops Inland Sentinel, June 16, 1888.

4 Donald The Truth, June 30, 1888.

5 Ibid., July 28, 1888.

6 Kamloops Inland Sentinel, August 10, 1889.

7 New Westminster The Truth, September 5, 1889.

the publication of the Nelson Miner.

The first paper actually to be printed in Revelstoke, the Kootenay Star, made its debut on June 22, 1889. It was a four-page edition which appeared under the editorship of James W. Vail.⁸ Hugh McCutcheon, the owner and publisher of the Kamloops Sentinel, was the owner of the Star, but he left the operation of the newspaper to Vail.⁹ In January, 1891, Vail left Revelstoke, and he was succeeded first by D.J. King, late editor of the Sentinel, and then, in September, 1891, by R.W. Northey, a prominent figure in subsequent newspaper work in Revelstoke. Northey remained as editor until September, 1893, when he left for a holiday in Toronto. His career as a newspaper man in Revelstoke, however, was not finished.

During and after Northey's editorship, the Star suffered financially. The subscribers and merchants of Revelstoke began to criticize the manner in which the newspaper was being operated, and eventually withheld their support. The paper struggled on until March 31, 1894, when it finally ceased publication. In its valedictory, the Kootenay Star summed up its experiences, and the experiences of all small newspapers of the era, when it said:

I am leaving with the snow; I am going 'out of sight;'
My twinklings you will never see again;
I am very glad to quit this uncongenial sphere
On which my bright effulgence shone in vain.

8 Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

9 Campbell, B.R., "The Kootenay Mail: Revelstoke's second newspaper," British Columbia Historical Quarterly, vol. 15 (January-April, 1951), p. 2.

'Twas difficult to please more than one or two each week,
 For each reader had an idea of his own
 On every topic 'neath the sun, how a paper should be run,
 And scrupled not to let the same be known.

I've been criticized and cuss'd; I've been victimized and wuss
 I've been starved and neglected and unloved.
 Without a dollar or a cent, all my debts paid but the rent,
 In the journalistic boneyard I am shoved.

This is my last farewell; but I'm not going to h---,
 As some of my dear friends have wished of yore;
 So I'll bid you all adieu; I'll just leave you 'in the stew!'
 As a STAR I'll never twinkle any more.

I am nothing loth (sic) to go, to give the MAIL a show;
 But I wish to make this sole and last request ----
 Vouchsafe to my successor what you would not give to me ----
 A living --- in this wild and wooly west.¹⁰

Long before the Kootenay Star ceased publication, however,
 the stirrings of a new newspaper venture had begun. In 1893 some
 business men in Revelstoke formed the Revelstoke Printing and
 Publishing Company, Limited.¹¹ In January, 1894, the shareholders
 met to elect officers, and chose W.M. Brown and A.H. Holdich as
 managing director and secretary respectively of the company. On
 April 14, 1894, Revelstoke's second newspaper appeared for the
 first time. R.W. Northey, the former editor of the Star, was
 the first editor of the Kootenay Mail. The paper was a weekly,
 and, in its first editorial, said:

The MAIL has no 'pull' with any individual,
 corporation, or political party, but will
 pursue a strictly independent course on the
 dividing wall, which will enable it to take
 a whack at any offending head which pops up
 on either side.¹²

The Mail added that mining interests would have first place in

10 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, March 31, 1894.

11 Campbell, loc. cit.

12 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, April 14, 1894.

its columns.

One of the most spectacular aspects of the Mail was a column entitled "Things said and done about town," written under the pseudonym of "Diogenes." The author was probably editor Northey, but proof of the writer's identity is lacking.¹³ "Diogenes" wrote in an outspoken, amusing style about local and provincial matters, and made both friends and enemies for the newspaper. He had no scruples about the subjects of his columns, and was not above attacking even the members of the publishing company which employed him. In March, 1895, "Diogenes" made some caustic comments about a case before the local police court, and as a result offended some of the directors of the Revelstoke Printing and Publishing Company.¹⁴ They decided to oust Northey. Northey barricaded himself within the offices of the Mail, and locked out the directors. Eventually, he had to make a sortie for refreshments, and the directors took control of the building.¹⁵ Previously, however, on March 9, 1895, two issues of the Mail appeared, one presenting Northey's side of the dispute, the other favouring the directors' view. Anyway, Northey's tenure of office as editor of the Mail was definitely ended. James W. Vail, the first editor of the Star, succeeded Northey, and, in his first issue, appealed for peace between the warring factions.¹⁶ The newspaper fracas split the Revelstoke

13 Campbell, op. cit., p. 6.

14 Ibid., pp. 4-5.

15 Ibid., p. 5.

16 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, March 16, 1895.

Printing and Publishing Company into two camps, divided Upper and Lower Town, caused a lawsuit between Northey and the publishing company over back wages due Northey, and briefly became the major issue in Revelstoke. Vail's plea for peace and sanity was eventually successful, and the paper gradually settled back to its routine life. Northey, the cause of all the excitement, left Revelstoke, and eventually resumed newspaper work in Rossland.¹⁷

After the Northey incident, the owners of the Mail were not happy about the condition of the paper, and, not surprisingly, disposed of the Mail in April, 1896, to B.R. Atkins and J.A. Smith.¹⁸ Smith had been associated with the Mail since May, 1894, and Atkins had also had former newspaper experience. Under the new arrangement, Atkins became the editor. He and Smith continued as owners and publishers of the Mail until March 31, 1898, when they dissolved their partnership, Atkins carrying on the paper with a new partner, Burt R. Campbell, who had been with the Mail since June, 1895.¹⁹ In May, 1899, Campbell and Atkins dissolved their partnership, and Campbell continued the publication of the newspaper.²⁰

In February, 1900, the Mail announced that it henceforth would be a semi-weekly paper.²¹ This change remained in effect

17 Campbell, op. cit., p. 6.

18 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, April 11, 1896.

19 Ibid., April 9, 1898.

20 Campbell, op. cit., p. 21.

21 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, February 3, 1900.

until January, 1901, when the Mail reverted to weekly publication.²²

In January, 1901, B.R. Campbell sold the Mail to E.A. Hagen, a mining engineer of some prominence, who had previously edited the Golden Era newspaper at Golden, British Columbia.²³ Hagen's ownership of the Mail was evidently not too successful because in September, 1902, he organized the Kootenay Mail Publishing Company, Limited, and sold a considerable amount of stock to various business men in Revelstoke.²⁴ In May, 1905, financial and legal difficulties hit the Mail, but the paper struggled on, dropping some of its shareholders from the directorate, and adding new members.

From April, 1894, until January, 1897, the Mail had been the only newspaper in Revelstoke. On January 20, 1897, however, the Revelstoke Herald entered the newspaper field as a competitor to the Mail, appearing as a semi-weekly.²⁵ The Revelstoke Herald had originally been the Edmonton Herald, but had been moved to Revelstoke by its publishers, Arthur Johnson and G.E. Grogan.²⁶ R.P. Pettipiece was also interested in the new venture.²⁷ Grogan became the editor, Johnson was the business manager, and Pettipiece was a travelling agent for the Herald.²⁸ In its first issue,

22 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, January 4, 1901.

23 Ibid., January 17, 1901.

24 Campbell, op. cit., p. 31.

25 Revelstoke Herald, January 20, 1897.

26 Campbell, op. cit., p. 14.

27 Loc. cit.

28 Loc. cit.

the new paper declared that it was to be a free and independent one in every aspect of its publication, and would devote itself to the promotion of the welfare of the Revelstoke district.²⁹

In April, 1901, changes in the title and ownership of the Herald took place. The Revelstoke Herald Publishing Company acquired the business and plant of the Herald, by now operated by A. Johnson alone, and changed the newspaper's title to that of the Revelstoke Herald and Railway Men's Journal.³⁰ That name remained until January, 1906, but the people of Revelstoke continued to refer to the paper as the Herald. Johnson continued as managing director. The newly-owned paper was to be devoted to the interests of the city and district of Revelstoke, and, in addition, intended to cater particularly to the interests of the railway men who were such an important part of Revelstoke's life.³¹ Politically, the new Herald was to be independent.

The Herald and the Mail followed separate paths until 1906. Late in 1905, however, the owners and editors of both newspapers discussed seriously the question of amalgamating the two.³² In December, 1905, the Mail announced that the owners of the Mail and the Herald had arranged to unite under one new company, the Interior Publishing Company, and that they would publish one paper, the Mail-Herald.³³ The last issues of the Mail and the Herald as individual newspapers appeared on December 23 and December 28, 1905, respectively. The first issue of the new

29 Revelstoke Herald, January 20, 1897.

30 Revelstoke Herald and Railway Men's Journal, April 17, 1901.

31 Loc. cit.

32 Campbell, op. cit., p. 34.

33 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, December 23, 1905.

semi-weekly appeared on January 6, 1906.³⁴

During most of its career the Mail-Herald had the newspaper field in Revelstoke to itself. In December, 1908, however, appeared the Revelstoke Observer, a weekly edited by E.A. Haggen, one-time owner of the Kootenay Mail.³⁵ The Observer's life was short but stormy. Its first editorial pledged it to cleanse the community of some gross abuses which allegedly had sprung up.³⁶ Haggen began a vigorous campaign against George S. McCarter, a local barrister prominent in the affairs of the Mail-Herald, Thomas Taylor, Revelstoke's representative in the provincial legislature, and W.W. Foster, then the local police magistrate. Haggen claimed that his paper was the spearhead of a reform movement, and in May, 1909, began dubbing the Observer "The People's Paper."³⁷ In July, 1909, the clash between Haggen and McCarter came to a climax when McCarter and S.A. Munday had Haggen arrested because of a financial dispute between the three men. Haggen was eventually acquitted but the Observer ceased publication in August, 1909.³⁸ On September 1, the Mail-Herald abruptly announced that Haggen had been elected to the directorate of the

34. Revelstoke Mail-Herald, January 6, 1906.

35. Revelstoke Observer, December 4, 1908.

36. Revelstoke Observer, December 4, 1908.

37. Ibid., May 7, 1909.

38. The last edition on file in the Archives of British Columbia is that for August 20, 1909.

Interior Publishing Company to replace G.S. McCarter, and had become the editor of the Mail-Herald, while Arthur Johnson was to remain as managing editor.³⁹

The Mail-Herald served Revelstoke for eight more years. In November, 1911, however, the business men who controlled the Interior Publishing Company relinquished control of the paper to Joseph K. Johnson and Ralph G. Scruton, formerly manager and editor respectively of the Creston Review.⁴⁰ J.K. Johnson became the manager and Scruton the editor, while Arthur Johnson, with the Mail-Herald almost continuously since its inception, became the job-printing foreman. In 1914 several changes took place in the operation of the paper. In February, J.K. Johnson ceased to be manager.⁴¹ On April 11, 1914, fire practically gutted the offices of the paper.⁴² Publication did not resume until May 6, 1914. E.G. Rooke succeeded Scruton as editor and manager in May.⁴³

In 1915 the Mail-Herald began to feel the effect of the competition which it was receiving from the recently-begun Revelstoke Review. In May the Interior Publishing Company changed its name to the Mail-Herald Publishing Company, Limited.⁴⁴ In November editor Rooke left Revelstoke for Vancouver, and shortly after his departure the Mail-Herald became a weekly paper.⁴⁵ F.E.

39 Revelstoke Mail-Herald, September 1, 1909.

40 Ibid., November 18, 1911.

41 Ibid., February 18, 1914.

42 Ibid., May 6, 1914.

43 Ibid., May 30, 1914.

44 Ibid., May 8, 1915.

Gigot succeeded Rooke, and he remained as editor until the newspaper ceased to publish.⁴⁶ In April, 1917, the last issue of the Mail-Herald appeared.⁴⁷

In 1913, another competitor for the Mail-Herald appeared briefly. The Revelstoke Argus, edited and owned by H.G. (Pinky) Knight and published by the Argus Company, Revelstoke, probably made its first appearance on May 7, 1913.⁴⁸ Knight was an erratic person, and published his newspaper erratically. The Argus was supposedly published once a week. It appeared only for a very short time.

On April 11, 1914, the Revelstoke Review, the paper which has had the longest, continuous record of publication of any of Revelstoke's newspapers, made its first appearance. W.H. Bohannan was the first editor and manager of the new paper.⁴⁹ In 1915 Arthur Johnson, one of the founders of the Revelstoke Herald, and also at one time on the staff of the Mail-Herald, succeeded Bohannan.⁵⁰ In 1916 the Review, controlled as it was by a group of men favouring the Liberal party, played a prominent part in

46 Revelstoke Mail-Herald, November 27, 1915.

47 Ibid., April 14, 1917.

48 Volume 1, number 14, the only issue on file in the Archives of British Columbia, bears the date of August 6, 1913.

49 Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

50 Loc. cit.

the defeat of Thomas Taylor and the election of Dr. W.H. Sutherland to the provincial legislature.⁵¹ Arthur Johnson remained with the paper until September, 1917, when he resigned to become Gold Commissioner for the district. After the collapse of the Mail-Herald in April, 1917, the Review, and its publishers, the Revelstoke Review Publishing Company, had possession of the newspaper field in Revelstoke. Following Arthur Johnson's resignation, Walter Jordan edited the Review until June, 1923, when he was succeeded by Frank A. Briscoe.⁵² In November, 1923, J.H. Mohr, with the Review for the previous six years, succeeded Briscoe.⁵³ From July, 1926, until May, 1935, Mohr utilized the services of Arvid W. Lundell as editor of the newspaper, while Mohr, himself, was the manager.⁵⁴ In 1935 Lundell relinquished his post to take up political work for the Conservative party in British Columbia.⁵⁵

In 1931 the Revelstoke Bulletin, a mimeographed semi-weekly paper edited by George Donaldson, began publication.⁵⁶ Mrs. Mary Sutherland eventually took over the direction of the Bulletin. In March, 1944, a merger of the Revelstoke Review and the Bulletin took place, J.H. Mohr, Mrs. Sutherland, S.T. Cary and A.W. Lundell

51 Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

52 Ibid., June 6, 1923.

53 Ibid., November 28, 1923.

54 Ibid., May 10, 1935.

55 Loc. cit.

56 Ibid., March 30, 1944.

all becoming equal stockholders in the amalgamated company.⁵⁷ Under the new arrangement, the Bulletin was issued each Monday, and the Review each Thursday. A.W. Lundell became editor of the Review, and has continued in that capacity ever since. Since 1949 Lundell has had the controlling interest in the newspaper.

It is unlikely that the Review will have a competitor in the near future because past experience has seemed to prove that there is only enough local advertising to support one newspaper at a time in Revelstoke.

57 Revelstoke Review, March 30, 1944.

Chapter Ten

Religious and educational affairs

To the Roman Catholic Church belongs the honour of holding the first religious ceremony in the Big Bend area. In 1838 Fathers Demers and Blanchet of the Oblate Order set out from St. Boniface for the far West with a party employed by the Hudson's Bay Company. The two men hoped to spread the Faith among the Indians and fur traders. When the party reached Boat Encampment on October 14, 1838, the two priests celebrated the first Mass on the mainland of British Columbia.¹ Then they set out down the Columbia River to a point near the present-day Arrowhead and the influx of the Columbia into the Upper Arrow Lake.

It was during the voyage of the party of the two priests down the Columbia that an accident occurred which gave to Death Rapids, or the Dalles des Morts, its name.² Two-thirds of the party descended the river in safety, but the boat which went back up the river to Boat Encampment to bring down the remainder suffered a mishap at the rapids on the return journey down the Columbia. In running the rapids the boat was swamped, and only

1 Cottingham, M.E., A history of the West Kootenay district in British Columbia, M.A. thesis, U.B.C., April, 1947, pp. 165-166.

2 Scholefield, E.O.S., and Howay, F.W., British Columbia from the earliest times to the present, Vancouver, Clarke, 1914, vol. 2, pp. 606-607.

fourteen of the twenty-six passengers were saved. The broken barge drifting down the river brought the first tragic news of the disaster to the anxious people at the head of the Arrow Lakes.

During the stay on the Arrow Lakes, the two priests performed baptisms, marriages and funerals. The early Catholic missionaries established their home on the Columbia River, and made periodic visits to the native tribes of British Columbia.

In 1846 Father Pierre Joseph De Smet, a member of the Jesuit Order, and probably the most renowned of all pioneer Catholic missionaries, passed the site of modern Revelstoke on his return from a journey which had carried him from his headquarters on the Columbia River, via Fort Colville, Tobacco Plains, Columbia Lake, across the Rockies to Jasper House, and back across Athabasca Pass, down the Wood River to Boat Encampment.³ He reached Boat Encampment on May 10, 1846, and by May 29, was back at Fort Colville.

From the time of Father De Smet's journey until the days of the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, religious figures in the Big Bend region were almost non-existent. When the railway was being built across the Selkirks, however, Father Nicolas Coccola, a member of a teaching and missionary order, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, served the construction camps from Yale to Calgary between 1885 and 1887. He was the first priest to celebrate Mass in Farwell.⁴ In 1888, Father J.A. Bedard,

3 Revelstoke Review, May 13, 1932.

4 Loc. cit.; Coccola, Nicolas, The life and Work of the Rev. Father Nicolas Coccola, O.M.I., 1924, Transcript, Archives of B.C., pp. 20, 21 and 30.

O.M.I., secured the erection of a church at Donald, the first Catholic church in the Big Bend area.⁵ Father Bedard also served Revelstoke intermittently, and attempted, unsuccessfully, to secure a church site and building there.⁶ It remained for Father Joseph Accorsini to supply the drive which resulted in the building of Revelstoke's first Catholic church. In June, 1893, Father Accorsini, newly-arrived at Donald, began to collect funds for a church for Revelstoke,⁷ and on November 19, 1893, he celebrated the first Mass in the new structure.⁸ In 1900, the Catholic church was moved to a new site, and subjected to considerably renovations and improvements.⁹ On December 14, 1900, Father Thayer officiated at the dedication of the remodelled St. Francis Church. Since 1893 the Catholic priests have ministered to their flocks in Revelstoke in their own churches.

The major Protestant denominations all had regular or visiting ministers in Revelstoke in the early days, but at first they shared a common building for the services. This building was first a barracks of the Royal North West Mounted Police in

5 Donald Truth, October 20, 1888.

6 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, August 23, 1890.

7 Ibid., July 29, 1893.

8 Revelstoke Review, May 13, 1932.

9 Loc. cit.

the era of railway construction, which later served as a school.¹⁰ From 1888 to 1891 it did duty as a church for three Protestant denominations, the Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist groups.¹¹ On successive Sundays a minister of each denomination would preach in Revelstoke's first church.

In 1884 the Church of England first had a representative on the site of modern Revelstoke. Bishop A.W. Sillitoe of New Westminster came to Farwell to examine the prospects of establishing an Anglican mission there.¹² As a result of Bishop Sillitoe's brief visit, the Reverend Henry Irwin, the first Anglican minister to serve the Kootenays regularly, arrived in Kamloops in 1885, and from 1885 to 1887 visited the points between Kamloops and Donald.¹³ In 1887 he moved to Donald, and there erected the first church in the Selkirk Mountains, St. Peter's Anglican Church.¹⁴ Henry Irwin, a kindly, honest, industrious man, endeared himself to his rough flock as few other men could, and earned the affectionate name of "Father Pat."

The Anglicans were the last of the large denominations to erect a permanent church in Revelstoke, but, prior to 1896, when what later was called St. Peter's Anglican Church was constructed,

10 Revelstoke Review, May 13, 1932.

11 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, June 21, 1890.

12 Revelstoke Review, May 13, 1932.

13 Sproat, G.M., Journal, 1886, (See the entry for February 2, 1886); and Cottingham, op. cit., p. 233.

14 Loc. cit.

several ministers from surrounding points preached sermons in the town. The two most frequent visitors were the Reverend J.C.C. Kemm¹⁵ of Donald and the Reverend Field Yolland¹⁶ of Ashcroft. Field Yolland spent the summer of 1895 in Revelstoke, and, as a result of his efforts, a Building Committee of the Church of England, led by F.B. Wells, gathered funds for a new church which was completed in the spring of 1896.¹⁷ Field Yolland, Revelstoke's first resident Anglican vicar, officiated at the first service in Holy Trinity Church in April, 1896.¹⁸ In June, 1897, the name was changed to St. Peter's.¹⁹ Subsequently, the Anglicans erected a rectory and a parish hall.

In 1888 the Methodist Church sent its first representative, the Reverend James Turner, to Revelstoke.²⁰ Turner remained in Revelstoke until June, 1891, when he was succeeded by the Reverend Charles Ladner.²¹ During Turner's stay in Revelstoke he was responsible for the construction of a Methodist Church in the town. On January 4, 1891, the Reverend W.L. Hall of Kamloops

15 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, February 28, 1891.

16 Ibid., April 22, 1893.

17 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, November 2, 1895; Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

18 Ibid., May 13, 1932.

19 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, June 19, 1897.

20 Scholefield and Howay, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 640.

21 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, June 6, 1891.

presided at the dedication of the church.²² The new church had an organ and an organist, W.A. Jowett.²³ The building was later moved to another site, but remained in use as a church until 1927.²⁴

J.S. Woodsworth was probably the most famous man to preach for the Methodist Church in Revelstoke. As the Reverend J.S. Woodsworth, he arrived in Revelstoke in 1907 to re-establish order there after a disastrous split in the congregation. He successfully settled the dispute, and remained in the city long enough to become familiar with all types of Revelstoke's mining, logging and railway men. In June, 1907, he left Revelstoke. While he was in Revelstoke he seriously considered leaving the Methodist Church, a step which he finally took for the last time in 1918.²⁵

One other Methodist minister, the Reverend C.A. Procunier, deserves special mention, not so much for his contributions towards Methodism as for other reasons. Procunier succeeded Charles Ladner in Revelstoke in June, 1893, and remained until May 26, 1895. In December, 1894, he inaugurated a form of night

22 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, January 3, 1891.

23 Loc. cit.

24 Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

25 For details on Woodsworth's activities in Revelstoke, see: MacInnis, Grace, J.S. Woodsworth; a man to remember, Toronto, Macmillan, 1953, pp. 53-58.

school for young men over the legal school age, and carried on his project until he left Revelstoke.²⁶ He later returned, this time as a minister of the Church of England, and remained in Revelstoke in that capacity until he joined Canada's armed forces in World War One.²⁷

The Presbyterian Church also had its ministers in Revelstoke in the early days. The Reverend A.H. Cameron, who previously had been serving the construction crews on the Canadian Pacific Railway, took charge of the field between Calgary and Revelstoke in 1886,²⁸ and was responsible for the construction of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church at Donald in 1888.²⁹ In February, 1887, he preached his first service in Revelstoke in an old shack.³⁰ He served Revelstoke until he left the area in July, 1888. After Cameron came a series of young Presbyterian missionaries, each of whom spent a short time in Revelstoke.³¹ Finally, in May, 1891, the Reverend Thomas Paton arrived from Donald as the Presbyterians' first resident minister in Revelstoke.³² He remained until May, 1893.

During the first few years of the Presbyterians' activities

26 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, June 24, 1893; Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, December 8, 1894, and May 25, 1895.

27 Revelstoke Review, May 13, 1932.

28 Keremeos Trumpet, March 5, 1909.

29 Revelstoke Review, May 13, 1932.

30 Keremeos Trumpet, March 5, 1909.

31 Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

32 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, May 16, 1891.

in Revelstoke, the denomination shared Revelstoke's all-denominational church with the Anglicans and Methodists. When the other groups found different quarters for their services, the Presbyterians acquired the sole occupancy of the old school house building.³³ In March, 1892, the Presbyterians renovated and added to the building, and in April the Reverend Thomas Paton conducted the first services in the new quarters. When the Presbyterian Church of Revelstoke was officially recognized in March, 1893, the newly-chosen church elders decided that the old school house was inadequate, and decided to construct a new building.³⁴ In July, 1894, the Reverend J. Knox Wright presided at the opening service in the new church, St. Andrew's.³⁵ The Reverend C.T. Baylis, who had succeeded Thomas Paton, was the driving force behind the construction of the new building.³⁶

In March, 1905, as a result both of overcrowding and of considerable dissension within the Presbyterian congregation, some of the members of St. Andrew's Church banded together to build a new edifice, Knox Presbyterian Church, and secured the Reverend J.R. Robertson of Grand Forks as the regular minister.³⁷ In November, 1905, the first services were held in Knox Church. In July, 1909, Robertson announced his resignation from his

33 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, March 26, 1892.

34 Ibid., March 18, 1893.

35 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, August 4, 1894.

36 Ibid., September, 1894.

37 Ibid., March 25 and September 16, 1905.

charge in order to pave the way for the reunion of the two Presbyterian congregations.³⁸ The two groups reunited under the new congregational name of St. John's, utilizing the old Knox Church building.

In 1925, most of the Presbyterian and Methodist congregations in Canada amalgamated under the new name of the United Church of Canada. In Revelstoke the old Presbyterian building became the United Church, and served until 1937 when it was badly damaged by fire.³⁹ A new United Church was then built.

Other religious denominations have served Revelstoke intermittently, but none of them has matched the continuity of service of, or attracted as many regular followers as, the groups already described. In 1954 the principal religious institutions there included the United, Catholic, Anglican, Pentecostal and Christian Alliance churches.

The educational welfare of Revelstoke's population has been attended to almost as long as the spiritual aspect. Educational activities in the Revelstoke area commenced in January, 1887, when Revelstoke's population first began to include several families with children of school-age. In that month Miss L.M. McAlpine began teaching her first class of seventeen pupils in an old, one-room building which the School Board had secured for the purpose.⁴⁰ The members of Revelstoke's first School

38 Revelstoke Observer, August 6, 1909.

39 Vancouver Sun, February 23, 1937; Vancouver Province, October 23, 1937.

40 British Columbia, Department of Education, Annual report of the public schools of the province of British Columbia, 1886-1887 (hereafter referred to as B.C., Education, Annual report), Victoria, Queen's Printer, 1887, p. 202.

Board were S.W. Lobb, secretary, G.M. Sproat and Frederick Fraser.⁴¹ In September, 1887, the Revelstoke school failed to re-open when the trustees found that there were not enough students in Revelstoke to meet the statutory requirements necessary to keep the school open.⁴² A school was started at Donald in September, 1887, but Revelstoke remained without one for two years.⁴³

In August, 1889, the members of the Revelstoke School Board hired J.W. Thomson to act as teacher for the 1889-1890 school year.⁴⁴ The building in which Thomson held his classes had formerly been a police barracks during the railway construction era, and was also used as a church. The school enrollment was twenty-nine, the largest collection of students in the electoral district. By the end of the school year there were forty-four pupils attending the Revelstoke school.⁴⁵

In March, 1890, the Revelstoke school was officially recognized by the Department of Education at Victoria, and the provincial government shortly afterwards made an appropriation of \$1,500 for a new school.⁴⁶ When the building was completed,

41 B.C., Education, Annual report, 1886-1887, p. 238

42 Ibid., p. 202.

43 Loc. cit.

44 B.C., Education, Annual report, 1889-1890, p. 210.

45 Ibid., p. 202.

46 Ibid., p. xlviii.

it had two class rooms, each of which could accommodate sixty pupils. On January 13, 1891, the school was opened.⁴⁷

The school population of Revelstoke increased so rapidly that by 1898 it was too large for the existing school quarters.⁴⁸ Another room had to be added to the school in 1898, and in October, 1899, the formal opening of another two-room school building took place.⁴⁹ The total accommodation was still not excessive, for the enrollment in the schools in September, 1899, totalled 211 pupils. To cope with the rapidly increasing attendance there were now five teachers.

On January 1, 1902, under a new system devised by the Department of Education, the cities of the province became responsible for the upkeep of their schools.⁵⁰ In February, 1901, the Revelstoke School Board had suggested to the Department of Education that Revelstoke needed a high school.⁵¹ The department had replied that there were not yet sufficient students to warrant one. After an inspection of the school buildings in January, 1902, the school trustees applied to the provincial government for financial aid for an additional school building for Revelstoke, and succeeded in getting a promise of \$10,000

47 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, January 17, 1891.

48 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, October 14, 1899.

49 Loc. cit.

50 Ibid., January 18, 1902.

51 Ibid., February 22, 1901.

towards the project.⁵² The City Council submitted a bye-law to the ratepayers to authorize the expenditure of an additional \$8,000 for an eight-room structure.⁵³ The bye-law passed. In January, 1903, Revelstoke's new school, "Central," opened under the principalship of A.E. Miller to serve the 288 pupils enrolled.⁵⁴

On September 15, 1904, C.B. Sissons inaugurated Revelstoke's first real high school in one of the old school buildings.⁵⁵ In June, 1906, an additional room was added to the high school.

By June, 1907, there were sixteen teachers directing 591 pupils in the eight schools in Revelstoke, Albert Canyon, Arrowhead, Beaton, Camborne, Illecillewaet and Comaplix.⁵⁶ Still the accommodation was insufficient. In January, 1909, the Revelstoke Observer said, editorially, that the city's schools were completely inadequate, and that there was a serious need for more class rooms for the pupils.⁵⁷ The school trustees persuaded the City Council to submit to the ratepayers a bye-law for the authorization of a loan of \$40,000 to buy more land and to erect a new school building.⁵⁸ On June 11, 1909, the ratepayers rejected the proposal.⁵⁹ Agitation for the new school continued, however, and finally resulted in its construction in 1910. The

52 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, May 9, 1902.

53 Ibid., May 30, 1902.

54 B.C., Education, Annual report, 1906-1907, p. A14.

55 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, January 7, 1905.

56 B.C., Education, Annual report, 1906-1907, p. Alxxxiv.

57 Revelstoke Observer, January 29, 1909.

58 Ibid., May 21, 1909.

59 Ibid., June 18, 25, 1909.

new school, "Selkirk," containing eight rooms, was officially opened in January, 1911.⁶⁰

Revelstoke still lacked adequate high school facilities. The parents and trustees began a drive for a new high school, but had a hard struggle to convince successive City Councils that the need was urgent. Finally the drive succeeded, and in 1913 the City Council asked for tenders for the building of a new, four-room school.⁶¹ In February, 1914, Horace Manning, the Chairman of the School Board and one of the leaders of the movement for the new school, officially opened the Revelstoke High School.

No further major additions were made to Revelstoke's school facilities until 1938 when a technical school was built adjacent to the high school.⁶² In the Revelstoke School District in June, 1951, there were eight schools, twenty-seven divisions, thirty-two teachers and 795 pupils.⁶³ There were two elementary schools - Selkirk and Central - and a high school in Revelstoke, a combined elementary and high school at Arrowhead, and other elementary schools at Albert Canyon, Beaton, Glacier and Twelve Mile Ferry.⁶⁴ In 1951, also, the Revelstoke City Council passed a bye-law for an addition to the present high school of three more classrooms and a combined gymnasium-auditorium.⁶⁵ The

60 B.C., Education, Annual report, 1911-1912, p. A18.

61 B.C., Education, Annual report, 1913-1914, p. A22.

62 Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

63 B.C., Education, Annual report, 1950-1951, pp. K14, 17-19.

64 Loc. cit.

65 Ibid., p. K97.

extension was long overdue. On November 21, 1951, the new section was officially opened.

Since Revelstoke's first school opened in 1887, the number of pupils, teachers and schools in the Revelstoke School District has increased steadily from seventeen pupils, one teacher and a one-room school in January, 1887, to almost 800 pupils, over thirty teachers, two high schools and six elementary schools in 1954. The growth of the school population reflects the general increase in the population of the district. The pioneers of the area, too, deserve much credit for the energetic manner in which they worked to achieve the present high standards of the educational facilities of the area.

Chapter Eleven

Recreational activities

Any study seeking to present an accurate picture of the history of an area should attempt to depict the ways in which the residents spent their leisure hours. Recreational activities and organizations often give a clear illustration of the problems facing a community. One of Revelstoke's early, and continuing, problems arising out of the town's position as a centre of railway activities, was the presence of a large number of single men employed by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. How could these men be educated, entertained and kept law-abiding in a small pioneer community when there were no centres available to keep them contented and busy in their spare hours? The men themselves and the railway company provided one answer in 1890 when they organized the Canadian Pacific Railway's Reading Room Association, secured books, subscribed to newspapers and periodicals, and operated their small library in an efficient, if rough, manner. The institution was used extensively.¹ In addition to the Reading Room Association, two other libraries started in Revelstoke in 1890, the Revelstoke Reading Room and Library Association,² and the Revelstoke Sunday School Library.³ All

1 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, June 7, 1890.

2 Ibid., October 4, 1890.

3 Ibid., October 11, 1890.

three groups flourished in the winters of 1890 and 1891. By 1893, however, they were inactive.⁴

An organization closely associated with the several library groups in the town was the Revelstoke Literary Association which was organized in November, 1890, to provide a series of discussions to entertain its members during the long winter evenings.⁵ The group gathered fortnightly to hear and discuss talks on subjects as varied as "The McKinley Tariff Bill" and "Which is the Happier, Single or Married Life?"⁶ Musical and elocution selections usually followed the paper for the evening.

Music played a large part in Revelstoke's early social life. Its beginnings, however, were comic. The French custom of serenading recently-married couples with an "orchestra" of pots, pans, empty oil cans, kettles, whistles and other noise-makers - the custom known as "charivari" - began in Revelstoke under the leadership of Morgan David, a bookkeeper in a local sawmill.⁷ David and his group met newly-weds at the railway station, escorted them to their homes, and then played soft music for them on their first night at home. It was a short step from the "charivari" to a real band.

In September, 1892, H.N. Coursier brought to Revelstoke the equipment of the recently-defunct Canadian Pacific Railway

4 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, December 9, 1893.

5 Ibid., November 15, 1890.

6 Ibid., December 6, 1890.

7 Ibid., July 23, 1892.

Band at Kamloops,⁸ and in December, the Revelstoke Orchestral Band began holding practices.⁹ In February, 1893, the band gave its first public performance, a most successful one.¹⁰ For some reason, however, the orchestral band was allowed to die, and not until 1896 did another local musical organization appear. In 1896 the Revelstoke Brass Band was formed, and after purchasing instruments through a fund subscribed by the merchants of Revelstoke, the group met for the first practice on December 2, 1896.¹¹ On January 1, 1897, the band made its first public appearance, touring the hotel bars in the town.¹² The first uniforms of the bandsmen consisted of white duck coats, and hats decorated with a red, white and blue band. Unfortunately, there was an error made in the making of the uniforms, the material was not pre-shrunk, and after several washings the uniforms would not fit even the smallest boy.

Another activity of Revelstoke's pioneers was dancing. In January, 1892, a group of people formed the Revelstoke Quadrille Club, and held a successful inaugural dance.¹³ Thereafter, the dances came weekly during the rest of that winter. The organization was so successful that in October, 1892, after the end of the summertime recreational activities, it was re-formed.¹⁴ On the occasion of the opening of Peterson's Hall in November,

8 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, September 24, 1892.

9 Ibid., December 10, 1892.

10 Ibid., March 4, 1893.

11 Ibid., December 5, 1896.

12 Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

13 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, January 16 and 23, 1892.

14 Ibid., October 1 and 8, 1892.

1892, the Quadrille Club and other groups united in putting on what the Kootenay Star termed "...the best dance in the history of Revelstoke."¹⁵

Revelstoke's mountainous setting has provided natural facilities for winter sports. In March, 1891, about twenty people took part in the first hike of the Jordan Club, a group of snowshoe enthusiasts, both men and women, who liked to go on weekly camping trips to several cabins owned by the members in the vicinity of Revelstoke, and to spend the evenings in dancing, usually to the music of a mouth organ.¹⁶ The original members of the Jordan Club formed the nucleus of the larger Revelstoke Snowshoe and Toboggan Club which came into existence late in 1891.¹⁷ In December, 1891, the club completed Revelstoke's first toboggan slide.¹⁸ In 1892, the enthusiasm for tobogganing proved so great that the residents of Revelstoke built another slide.

Mountain-climbing, too, has had its followers in the Revelstoke area. The Selkirk Range has always been a favourite spot for members of the Canadian Alpine Club. When A.O. Wheeler, the President of the Canadian Alpine Club, visited Revelstoke in January, 1909, the mountaineers of Revelstoke took advantage of his visit to form the Revelstoke Mountaineering Club, with Wheeler as honorary president, and the Reverend J.R. Robertson

15 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, November 19, 1892.

16 Ibid., March 7, 1891.

17 Ibid., March 19, 1892.

18 Ibid., December 12, 1891.

as president.¹⁹

For years ski-ing has been a popular pastime in Revelstoke, and the city's skiers have won world-renown. From the time of the late 1880's, the sport had its devotees, but in 1914, the activity received a great impetus when the Revelstoke Ski Club was formed.²⁰ When the club held its first tournament in February, 1915, it had over 100 members. Since 1914 Revelstoke has become known as one of the birthplaces of champion skiers.

Fraternal organizations appeared early in Revelstoke. They particularly attracted unmarried railway employees whose leisure time was often pathetically empty. In March, 1894, the Revelstoke Lodge No. 25 of the Independent Order of Oddfellows was established, with eighteen members.²¹ In March, 1897, the Independent Order of Foresters appeared in Revelstoke.²² In 1897, also, the Glacier Lodge of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, the fraternal side of a union, moved its headquarters from Donald, where it had been established in 1890, to Revelstoke, following the movement of the railway company's facilities to Revelstoke.²³ In 1899 the Knights of Pythias established the Gold Range Lodge No. 26 in Revelstoke.²⁴ In 1904 the Gold

19 Revelstoke Mail-Herald, January 9, 1909.

20 Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

21 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, March 17, 1894.

22 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, March 13, 1897.

23 Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

24 Loc. cit.

Range Lodge No. 341 of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Engineers also moved to Revelstoke from Kamloops.²⁵ These and other fraternal organizations, many of them originating from the unions in the town, did much to alleviate the monotony of the life of the railway employees.

Another successful organization directly aimed at the railway employees, was the Revelstoke Branch of the Young Men's Christian Association.²⁶ In May, 1905, the Kootenay Mail suggested, editorially, that the citizens of Revelstoke and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company should cooperate in establishing a branch of the Y.M.C.A. in the city.²⁷ The railway company had allotted a substantial sum to provide such a branch in Revelstoke in accordance with its policy elsewhere of voting sums of money for the construction of buildings to house branches of the Y.M.C.A. in the divisional points where many young, single employees were concentrated.²⁸ In June and July, 1905, the officials of the railway company and private citizens conferred on the best way to establish the branch.²⁹ In July, a committee was appointed to raise subscriptions to construct a building for the branch, and in October, 1905, a Board of Directors of twenty-four men, twelve representing the railway's

25 Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

26 Hereafter referred to as the Y.M.C.A.

27 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, May 13, 1905.

28 Loc. cit.

29 Ibid., June 3, July 8, 1905.

employees and the other twelve the citizens of Revelstoke, chose the officers for the Revelstoke Branch of the Y.M.C.A.³⁰ By October, 1905, over \$10,000 had been subscribed towards the project, and the railway company had also donated a site for the buildings.³¹ In December, 1905, the name of the Revelstoke Y.M.C.A. was changed to that of the Railroad Young Men's Christian Association of Revelstoke.³² In March, 1906, the Association officially opened its quarters. The completed structure was well-equipped, having sleeping accommodation, a class room, a gallery, a reading room, a reception room, two bowling alleys, a gymnasium, three shower baths, three dressing rooms, sixty lockers and a swimming pool.³³ Since 1906 the Y.M.C.A. has filled a need in Revelstoke, providing an outlet for the energy and talents of the young people of the community. Until 1933 the railway company gave financial aid to the Association. The city, also, gave substantial help by providing water and light and also by a generous policy of remitting part or all of the annual taxes.³⁴

The people of Revelstoke have experimented in almost all fields of sport and recreation. A list of some of the other activities proves the point. In April, 1891, the Revelstoke Lacrosse Club was formed.³⁵ In May, 1894, two tennis groups,

30 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, October 7, 1905.

31 Ibid., October 14, 1905.

32 Ibid., December 16, 1905.

33 Revelstoke Mail-Herald, March 31, 1906.

34 Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

35 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, April 25, 1891.

the Revelstoke Lawn Tennis Club and the Excelsior Lawn Tennis Club, came into being.³⁶ In 1894, also, Revelstoke had two soccer teams,³⁷ as well as the Revelstoke Amateur Dramatic Society.³⁸ In 1898, Robert Tapping completed a new hall, the Opera House, which was suitable for balls, concerts and other entertainments.³⁹ Baseball, too, has had its enthusiasts, and, since 1890, Revelstoke's teams have had many games with groups from Kamloops, Donald, Illecillewaet, Nelson, Ferguson and other centres in the neighbouring regions. Today, the city of Revelstoke has approximately one hundred communal organizations and facilities, including fraternal and service clubs, tennis courts, a golf course, a bowling green, a baseball team, a civic centre with organized sports and a swimming pool, and winter sports groups. The city offers the local residents and the visitors almost any type of recreation.

36 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, May 12, 1894.

37 Kamloops Sentinel, December 26, 1930.

38 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, January 5, 1895.

39 Ibid., May 7, 1898; Kamloops Sentinel, December 26, 1930.

Chapter Twelve

Surrounding communities.

Although the city of Revelstoke has been the dominant centre of the Big Bend region, other communities have also flourished, some of them later dying and others still thriving. One such community is Albert Canyon, now a tiny hamlet on the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway about twenty miles east of Revelstoke. Two miles east of the railway station, almost 300 feet below the line of railway, is the deep, narrow gorge known as Albert Canyon, through which the Illecillewaet River races in its westward course. Albert Canyon was the scene of some mining activity, dating from 1885,¹ and in 1891 witnessed an unsuccessful experiment in limestone quarrying when W.A. Jowett attempted to quarry the rock to use the limestone for building purposes.² In 1891, too, A.J. Strand had a fairly large farm acreage under cultivation, and succeeded in producing good crops.³

Walter Moberly was the first white man to penetrate the valley of the Illecillewaet to the site of Albert Canyon.⁴ The name, however, is derived from Albert L. Rogers, the nephew of

1 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, March 13, 1897.

2 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, May 23, 1891.

3 Loc. cit.

4 Green, W.S., Among the Selkirk glaciers, London, Macmillan, 1890, p. 112.

the discoverer of Rogers Pass, the first route of the Canadian Pacific Railway through the Selkirks.⁵ In later years, the valley of the North Fork of the Illecillewaet, now known as Tangier Creek, was used by mining men as a means of access to the Waverly Mine.⁶ A wagon road was built from Albert Canyon village to the head of Tangier Creek. A large amount of money was invested in the mine and road, but eventually the operations were abandoned.⁷ At one time Albert Canyon was also a point of some importance on the railway because it was there that the "pusher" locomotives, the engines which assisted freight and passenger trains over the Selkirks, were located.⁸ Eventually, however, Albert Canyon lost even its "pushers," and now is only a tiny dot on the route of the railway.

Illecillewaet is another settlement with much the same background as Albert Canyon. Situated on the main line of the railway about twenty-seven miles east of Revelstoke, the settlement first appeared in 1885 when the railway construction attracted many men to the area.⁹ A mining rush took place at

5 Wheeler, A.O., The Selkirk Mountains, Winnipeg, Stovel [1911], p. 37.

6 Ibid., p. 121.

7 Loc. cit.

8 Revelstoke Review, June 29, 1940.

9 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, February 27, 1897.

Illecillewaet, and numerous claims were staked. D.W. Corbin was the first to discover promising prospects.¹⁰ In 1886, T.W. Bain staked the Lanark Mine at Laurie, three miles east of Illecillewaet, and in July, 1887, the Lanark Mine began regular shipments of silver-lead ore, the first mine in British Columbia, incidentally, to send ore to a smelter.¹¹ In 1887 the settlement at Illecillewaet prospered, witnessing the construction of mining roads and trails.

One writer who saw Illecillewaet in 1888 described the settlement as a typical frontier village, composed mainly of prospectors, miners, loggers and railway workers.¹² Burnt, black, tree-trunks alternated with wooden houses. Some of the houses were on platforms raised above swampy pools resulting from the overflow of the river. Everywhere were the signs of man - empty meat tins and broken packing cases.

In 1888 the effects of a dispute about the ownership of precious metals in the railway belt hit the area, and virtually forced the suspension of mining operations.¹³ Most of the miners left the region. The mine at Laurie, however, enabled the settlement to exist, and warranted the construction of a school, churches, general stores and private homes. By 1916, there were only a few small, silver-lead mines operating, and Illecillewaet

10 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, February 27, 1897.

11 Loc. cit.

12 Green, op. cit., p. 112.

13 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, February 27, 1897.

settlement was little more than a collection of deserted, broken-down shacks. Today Illecillewaet is merely a siding on the railway, and shows little of its past prominence.

South of Revelstoke there are several communities in a far more thriving condition than the settlements at Albert Canyon and Illecillewaet. Arrowhead, for example, situated on a strategic spot at the point where the Columbia River widens into the Upper Arrow Lake, is the southern terminal of the Arrowhead branch line, and is also the northernmost point of the steamer services. Arrowhead has been a centre for logging and milling activities for many years. As early as 1905 the Arrowhead Lumber Company and the Big Bend Lumber Company employed a total of more than five hundred men.¹⁴ Arrowhead and Revelstoke have complemented each other's growth in many ways, one of which, for example, has been the lumber production at Arrowhead which has contributed to Revelstoke's prosperity as a railway centre. Another aspect of the relationship of the two communities, the social tie, may be illustrated by the fact that the people of Arrowhead contributed financially to the establishment of Revelstoke's first hospital, and, in return, the Revelstoke Hospital Society was largely responsible for the opening of a hospital at Arrowhead in April, 1905.¹⁵

East of Arrowhead, along the north shore of the North East Arm of the Upper Arrow Lake, is the town of Comaplix, at the

14 Victoria The Week, May 20, 1905.

15 Loc. cit.

mouths of Comaplix Creek and the Incomappleux River. Comaplix has also been a lumbering centre, and, in addition, a port of call for steamers. At one time the Bowman Lumber Company and the Forest Mills of British Columbia, Limited, were the bases of the community's economy.¹⁶ Senator Hewitt Bostock was one of the pioneers of Comaplix, establishing the first sawmill there.¹⁷

At the head of the North East Arm, southeast of Comaplix, is the town of Beaton. The community was originally established by James Wilson Thomson, one of Revelstoke's early school teachers, and subsequently a prominent figure in education in British Columbia.¹⁸ In 1890 Thomson went to the Lardeau area to take part in the mining activity there, and, with his partner, Michael Beaton, located the townsite of Thomson's Landing. For a while Thomson was an important man in the district, acting as a Justice of the Peace and a Notary Public. In 1907 he sold his holdings, and moved to Vancouver Island, dying in Victoria on January 31, 1934. Thomson's Landing eventually became known as Beaton, in honour of Thomson's partner.

On the Incomappleux River, which flows into the North East Arm east of Comaplix, is the town of Camborne. In 1899 a Cornishman named Cory Menhinick¹⁹ established a townsite at

16 British Columbia, Department of Lands, Report of the Minister of Lands, 1913, Victoria, King's Printer, 1914, p. D41.

17 Victoria The Week, May 20, 1905.

18 Victoria Colonist, February 1, 1934.

19 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, November 15, 1901.

the junction of Pool Creek and the Incomappleux (then known as "Fish") River, and built Camborne's first hotel, the Pen-dragon. Menhinick believed that the area surrounding his townsite had great mineral possibilities, and did much to bring the region into prominence.²⁰ By 1900 the population of Camborne totalled almost 2,000 people, most of whom were miners, and in 1901 the town had seven hotels and telephone connections with Revelstoke.²¹ By 1902 several stamp mills, including, for example, the Oyster-Criterion Mill, were in operation. Promising mines of the region included the Beatrice, Carbonate Hill and Gilman. Camborne's boom period was short, however, and, although today there is still mining in the area, the town itself is but a shadow of its former self.

20 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, November 15, 1901; Vancouver Province, March 17, 1934.

21 Loc. cit.

Chapter Thirteen

Colonial and provincial politics

In June, 1863, the Crown Colony of British Columbia achieved a form of representative government through the formation of a legislative council for the colony, one-third of the council to be appointed by the government after election by the various constituencies, and the remainder to be appointed by the government from the leading officials and magistrates of the colony.¹ In November, 1863, elections were held in the colony to select five "popular" representatives for appointment to the first legislative council. The area around present-day Revelstoke was included in Hope-Yale-Lytton constituency. The few voters in the vast region, none of them in the Big Bend, chose R.T. Smith as their first political representative.² On January 21, 1864, Smith attended the first meeting of the first legislative council at Sapperton, New Westminster, then the capital of British Columbia.³

1 Scholefield, E.O.S., and Howay, F.W., British Columbia from the earliest times to the present, Vancouver, Clarke, 1914, vol. 2, p. 166.

2 Robert Thompson Smith had been a Justice of the Peace and a Revenue Officer at Hope during the Fraser River gold rush of 1858, and then had become a travelling agent for the Victoria firm of Macdonald and Company, Bankers. Later, he and his partner, W.H. Ladner, played a considerable part in the Big Bend gold rush of 1865 and 1866, taking in the first cargo of goods to the area from the Fraser River, previous supplies having come in from the United States. Scholefield and Howay, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 36, 37, 154 and 169.

3 Ibid., vol. 2, p. 170.

In September, 1864, Smith did not seek re-election. Clement Francis Cornwall defeated W.J. Armstrong in the electoral contest to represent the Hope-Yale-Lytton riding at New Westminster.⁴ In addition, John C. Haynes, then in the Kootenay area, was appointed simultaneously as the magisterial representative on the legislative council.⁵ C.F. Cornwall⁶ had come to British Columbia from England in 1862, and, after practicing law at Wild Horse Creek, in the Kootenays, and in the Big Bend area, finally settled at Ashcroft as a gentleman farmer. He represented Hope-Yale-Lytton riding in 1864, and again in 1870 and 1871, after the union of the two colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia in 1866. When British Columbia became a province of Canada in 1871, Cornwall became a Senator and served in that capacity until 1881. From 1881 until 1886 he was the Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia.

The gold rush to the Big Bend in 1865 and 1866 brought to the Revelstoke area its first semi-permanent, white population. In 1866, also, events of great importance to British Columbia had occurred elsewhere. In August, 1866, Royal Assent had been given to an Act of the British House of Commons uniting the Crown

4 Victoria Colonist, October 20, 1864.

5 Scholefield and Howay, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 190.

6 For biographical material on Cornwall, see: Kerr, J.B., Biographical dictionary of well-known British Columbians, Vancouver, Kerr and Begg, 1890, pp. 130-132; Victoria Colonist, February 1, 1867, November 3, 1870, December 6, 1871, and May 31, 1881.

Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia.⁷ The name of the newly-united colony was henceforth to be British Columbia. The Big Bend region became part of a new constituency, Columbia-Kootenay, as a result of the union. In October, 1866, the Big Bend witnessed its first election for the new constituency.⁸ Polling stations were established at French Creek, Seymour, La Porte and McCulloch Creek, as well as at Wild Horse Creek, to permit the voters to send a representative of the Columbia-Kootenay riding to the first legislative council of the United Crown Colony of British Columbia, meeting at New Westminster in January, 1867. Exactly 400 voters cast ballots, 265 people preferring Robert Thompson Smith to his four opponents, W.C. McNamara, J.G. Barnston, R.L.T. Galbraith and a Mr. Duncan. To the winner of this contest, who had been the first political representative of Hope-Yale-Lytton district in the legislative council of the Crown Colony of British Columbia prior to the union of the two colonies in 1866, also belongs the honour of being the first representative of the district in the legislative council after the union.

In December, 1868, Edgar Dewdney replaced Smith as the representative of Kootenay,⁹ but Dewdney did not actually take his seat in the legislative council until the session of 1870,

7 Scholefield and Howay, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 227-229.

8 For details of the election, see: O'Reilly, Peter, Diary, 1866, entries for September 24, October 11, 12, 20, 22 and 25.

9 Victoria Colonist, December 21, 1868. (Dewdney's career is given in detail in the chapter below on federal politics.)

thus leaving Kootenay riding unrepresented.¹⁰ In the general election in November, 1870, Dewdney did not seek re-election. Two candidates, Robert Skinner and John Jessop, offered themselves to the electors. Of the fifty-four voters, forty preferred Skinner.¹¹ Actually, all the votes were cast either at Wild Horse or Perry creeks, and not one was polled in the Big Bend, now virtually deserted by the miners. Skinner's term in the legislative council was a short one. The council was called only to debate the Terms of Union with Canada, and after the debate, was prorogued in March, 1871.¹² It was never recalled. In July, 1871, after negotiations with the Canadian and British governments, British Columbia abandoned its status as a Crown Colony, and adopted the new one of a province of Canada.

In the first provincial election after British Columbia became part of Canada, Kootenay riding, with only thirty-nine voters casting ballots, returned two members to the first Legislative Assembly of British Columbia which met in Victoria on February 15, 1872.¹³ John Andrew Mara¹⁴ and Charles Todd¹⁵

10 Scholefield and Howay, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 254.

11 Victoria Colonist, December 2, 1870.

12 Scholefield and Howay, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 327.

13 The Canadian Parliamentary Companion, 1872 (hereafter referred to as C.P.C.), Montreal, Lovell, 1872, p. 458.

14 Mara's career is discussed in the chapter below on federal politics.

15 Born in Ontario, Charles Todd had arrived in British Columbia in 1862. Although he had been a school teacher in Ontario, he engaged in mining in British Columbia for some years. In April, 1875, he became the Superintendent of Police for British Columbia. Later, he became an Indian Agent on the Skeena River, and held that post until his death. Victoria Colonist, May 1 1875.

were the two successful candidates, and had the honour of being the first representatives of Kootenay riding. A third candidate, W.C. Milby, was defeated. Both Mara and Todd represented Kootenay riding in the provincial legislature until 1875.

In the general election of October, 1875, neither Mara nor Todd sought re-election in Kootenay riding. Four candidates offered themselves for the two seats in the legislature. A total of sixty-three voters cast sixteen votes for each of three candidates, A.W. Vowell, Charles Gallagher, and R.L.T. Galbraith, and fifteen votes for the fourth candidate, W.C. Milby. The returning officer, therefore, exercised his powers, and declared Vowell and Gallagher elected.¹⁶

Irish-born, Arthur Wellesley Vowell¹⁷ had arrived in British Columbia in 1862, and from 1864, when he first joined the provincial civil service, until 1910, when he retired from public life, he had a distinguished career as a public servant. In 1866 he had gone to the Big Bend area as the Chief Constable for the district, and in 1872 he became the Gold Commissioner and Stipendiary Magistrate for the Kootenay area. In 1873 and 1874 he was in the Omineca region in the same capacities. In 1874 he was to have gone to the Cassiar district to act as Gold Commissioner there, but, instead, declined the position, and resigned from the civil service to enter political life to combat certain abuses which he thought needed correcting. Politically,

16 C.P.C., 1876, p. 612.

17 For details of Vowell's career, see: Victoria Colonist, October 24, 1875, September 27, 1918; C.P.C., 1876, p. 609.

he served the Kootenay area for a very short time, resigning in 1876 to accept the appointment of Gold Commissioner in the Cassiar, the position which he had previously refused. In April, 1884, he returned to the Kootenay region as Gold Commissioner and Magistrate, and remained there until 1889, when he resigned from the provincial civil service to become the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the province. He committed suicide in Victoria in 1918.

Vowell's fellow-legislator, Charles Gallagher, who was also elected in 1875, had lived in Kootenay for the preceding twelve years. A plain, blunt-speaking, practical miner, Gallagher was Irish-born, and, like Vowell, had arrived in British Columbia in 1862.¹⁸ He served as Kootenay's representative from 1875 to 1882, being re-elected by acclamation in the general election of May, 1878. He did not seek re-election in July, 1882.

After A.W. Vowell's resignation in 1876, a fellow-legislator for Gallagher had to be found in the Kootenay district. In a bye-election in September, 1876, W.C. Milby¹⁹ defeated R.L.T. Galbraith by one vote, that of the returning officer. Only thirty-three people voted. William Cosgrove Milby had unsuccessfully contested the Kootenay riding in 1871 and 1875, both times barely missing election. His life as a legislator, however, was brief for he died in October, 1877, at Hope.²⁰

¹⁸ Victoria Colonist, October 24, 1875, April 20, 1878; C.P.C., 1878, p. 377.

¹⁹ C.P.C., 1877, p. 379.

²⁰ Victoria Colonist, October 27, 28 and 30, 1877.

In January, 1878, in the bye-election to fill Milby's vacant seat in the legislature, Robert Leslie Thomas Galbraith defeated A.E.B. Davie.²¹ Galbraith and Gallagher were re-elected by acclamation in the general election in May, 1878.²² Galbraith had been an unsuccessful candidate in the close electoral contest of 1875, having been defeated only by the vote of the returning officer, and in the bye-election in September, 1876. He, too, was of Irish origin, and had first come to the Kootenay region as a merchant during the rush to Wild Horse Creek.

In 1879, the provincial legislature passed an Act which recognized the sparseness of Kootenay riding's population by providing for one member, instead of two, to be elected for the district at the next general election. In July, 1882, Galbraith was re-elected by acclamation, and he continued to represent Kootenay constituency until 1886, when he did not seek office. He continued to live in the Kootenay area, serving as a government official for almost thirty years. In 1924, at the age of eighty-three, he died at Fort Steele.²³

In the general election in July, 1886, two candidates, Lieutenant-Colonel James Baker and William M. Brown, sought the single Kootenay seat. Baker defeated Brown, 111 votes to 74,

21 C.P.C., 1878, p. 329.

22 Ibid., 1879, p. 381.

23 Vancouver Sun, May 13, 1924.

and represented the whole of Kootenay from 1886 to 1890.²⁴ To Colonel Baker really belongs the honour of being the first representative of any of the people in the modern Revelstoke region. In any election prior to that of 1886, the successful candidate had been the representative of Kootenay, but, of course, could not represent an almost non-existent, certainly a non-permanent, population around Revelstoke.

In 1890 the provincial government passed a Redistribution Act dividing Kootenay riding into Kootenay East and Kootenay West - Kootenay West being the area which included Revelstoke.²⁵ Colonel Baker chose to represent Kootenay East, thus disappearing from the Revelstoke scene. In the provincial general election in June, 1890, Kootenay West riding first sent a member to the legislature. Four candidates, A.S. Farwell, J.W. Haskins, W.M. Brown and J.M. Kellie entered the field, and each fought fiercely to convince the voters that he alone was a suitable man to

24 Born in England in 1830, Colonel Baker had had a military career of some distinction, serving first in the British Navy until 1850, and then in the British Army until 1875. He was also a scholar and an author of note. With his two sons, he came to British Columbia in 1884, and soon settled at Cranbrook, of which, incidentally, he was virtually the founder. In 1886, he was first elected to the provincial legislature, and served there until 1900, when he returned to England. He held several portfolios in the provincial government, becoming Minister of Education and Immigration in May, 1892, and Provincial Secretary and Minister of Education, Immigration and Mines in 1895. From 1898 to 1900 he sat in the legislature as a private member. He died in England in July, 1906. Scholefield and Howay, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 444, 451-452, 489, 494, 496, 502 and 504; Victoria Colonist, July 31, 1906; C.P.C., 1887, pp. 344-345, 354.

25 Scholefield and Howay, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 451.

represent the riding.²⁶ For the first time a newspaper played a role in a political campaign in the riding. The Kootenay Star advocated Kellie's cause, appealing to the miners of the district to elect a mining man to secure needed reforms in the mining laws of the province.²⁷ On June 13 the voting was held in eight polling centres - Illecillewaet, Glacier, Revelstoke, McCulloch Creek, Hot Springs, Custom House, Nelson and Sproat. Each of the candidates had his strongholds, and the final count was very close. The successful candidate, Kellie, had forty-six votes, Brown secured forty-five, Farwell had forty and Haskins trailed with twenty-five.²⁸

Born in Ontario in 1848, J.M. Kellie had worked in the Kootenay area as a miner since 1884, and was undoubtedly familiar with the mining needs of his district.²⁹ He was also interested in bettering the lot of his fellow miners, and in June, 1889, was instrumental in forming what was probably the first association of miners in the Kootenay area.³⁰ True to his campaign pledge, he secured a seat on a three-man committee appointed to revise the mining laws of the province, and did valuable work on that organization.³¹ He was a conscientious

26 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, June 7, 1890.

27 Loc. cit.

28 Ibid., June 21, 1890.

29 Ibid., June 7, 1890.

30 Vancouver Province, December 13, 1927.

31 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, November 8, 1890.

worker, and attended faithfully to the duties of his legislative office. A blunt, forthright speaker, Kellie commanded the respect of his fellow legislators. It was he who coined the phrase "Kootenay Kow," and continually repeated it to drive home the point of the expression to the legislature. He claimed that the Kootenay area, the principal mining region in the province in the 1890's, was not receiving governmental appropriations commensurate with the revenues which it had contributed to the provincial treasury, and that, as milk with high butter-fat content is often used to enrich poorer milk, so Kootenay was being "milked" of its rich mineral resources to support the poorer districts in the province.³² After December, 1897, when Kellie joined the legislative opposition to the government led by Premier J.H. Turner, his speeches on the subject of the "Kootenay Kow" became increasingly vitriolic and scathing.³³

In February, 1894, the provincial legislature passed an Act providing for a redistribution of the legislative constituencies, and created the North Riding of West Kootenay, the district which included Revelstoke.³⁴ In July, 1894, in the first general election after the creation of the new constituency, Kellie defeated W.M. Brown by 217 votes to 125.³⁵ In 1898 the constituency became known as the Revelstoke Division of West

32 Vancouver Province, December 13, 1927.

33 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, December 18, 1897.

34 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, February 17, 1894.

35 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, July 21, 1894.

Kootenay riding.³⁶ Kellie retained his seat in a two-way electoral contest with William White. In the campaign Revelstoke for the first time saw a newspaper supporting each candidate, the Kootenay Mail aiding Kellie against the Turner Government, and the Herald backing White and the Turner group.³⁷ In the provincial general election in 1900, Kellie did not seek renomination.³⁸

In June, 1900, in one of the most polite campaigns in Revelstoke's history, Thomas Taylor of Trout Lake, a supporter of a group of Conservatives who wished to introduce party lines into British Columbia, defeated Alexander McRae.³⁹ Born in London, Ontario, in 1865, Taylor⁴⁰ came to Donald in 1888, and worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway Company for some time. Later he worked for the C.B. Hume Company at Trout Lake, and in 1893 became the mining recorder for the Trout Lake Mining Division. After his election in 1900, he represented Revelstoke

36 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, May 7, 1898.

37 Ibid., July 16, 1898.

38 In 1903 Kellie sought election to the provincial legislature as a Liberal representative, but lost to Thomas Taylor. He retained his mining interests in the Revelstoke region for almost twelve years, and then moved to Victoria, where he died on December 12, 1927. Victoria Times, December 12, 1927.

39 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, June 12, 1900.

40 Revelstoke Observer, December 31, 1908.

continuously until 1916, winning re-election in 1903, 1907, 1909 and 1912, as well as a bye-election in January, 1909, necessitated by his elevation to the provincial Cabinet. On December 21, 1908, Taylor became Minister of Public Works in the McBride Government, the first Minister of Public Works, incidentally, in British Columbia.⁴¹ (Prior to Taylor's appointment to the portfolio, the Department of Public Works had been combined with the Lands Department portfolio under the direction of one man, the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works.) Taylor also became British Columbia's first Minister of Railways after the creation of that portfolio in 1911.⁴² After the resignation of Sir Richard McBride, Premier of British Columbia, in December, 1915, Taylor entered the new government of Premier W.J. Bowser.⁴³ Upon the defeat of the Bowser Government in 1916, Taylor, also defeated in the general election, had to resign from his Cabinet posts, and returned to private life. In 1928 he returned to the Public Works Department in a non-political capacity, and retired in 1934.⁴⁴ He died in April, 1947, at the age of eighty-two.⁴⁵

In the general election in September, 1916, Dr. William

⁴¹ The Canadian Parliamentary Guide, 1909 (hereafter cited as C.P.G.), Ottawa, Mortimer, 1909, p. 400.

⁴² Ibid., 1915, p. 447.

⁴³ Ibid., 1916, p. 414.

⁴⁴ Victoria Times, November 9, 1928; Vancouver Province, May 29, 1934.

⁴⁵ Ibid., April 28, 1947.

Henry Sutherland, the Liberal candidate, defeated Thomas Taylor, just as everywhere else in the province the Liberal candidates were sweeping the Conservative Government of W.J. Bowser out of office.⁴⁶ Dr. Sutherland⁴⁷ was born in Prince Edward Island in 1876, and, after becoming a physician, was a surgeon at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Montreal, from 1899 to 1901. From 1903 until 1922 he was associated with the Queen Victoria Hospital in Revelstoke. Dr. Sutherland represented Revelstoke riding longer than any other man before him. He was re-elected in the general elections in 1920, 1924, 1928 and 1933, and also won a bye-election in February, 1922, necessitated by his becoming Minister of Public Works in the government of Premier John Oliver. In August, 1924, he also became Minister of Railways. After the defeat of the Liberal Government in the general election of 1928, he resigned his portfolios, but continued to represent Revelstoke until 1937, when he did not seek re-election. He was never defeated in an electoral battle. He died in Vancouver in September, 1945, in his seventieth year.⁴⁸

In 1932 the Conservative Government decided to eliminate Columbia riding, the constituency adjoining the Revelstoke district, by uniting it with the Revelstoke riding under the new name of Columbia-Revelstoke.⁴⁹ In 1934, however, the Liberal

46 C.P.G., 1917, p. 435.

47 Ibid., 1937, p. 412.

48 Vancouver Sun, September 5, 1945.

49 C.P.G., 1934, p. 357.

Government re-created Columbia riding by detaching it from the Revelstoke unit.⁵⁰ Since 1934 there has been no major change in the shape or size of Revelstoke riding.

In 1937 three candidates sought the right to represent Revelstoke in the provincial legislature.⁵¹ Harry Johnston, the Liberal nominee, defeated W.A. Sturdy, a Conservative, and Andrew Almen, the candidate representing the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation Party.⁵² Born in Teeswater, Ontario, in 1883, Johnston⁵³ arrived in Arrowhead in 1906, and became a merchant. In 1918 he entered the lumber business, and was a successful lumberman at the time of his entry into politics in 1937. He successfully defended his seat in the general election of 1941, but died in January, 1943, before the end of his term, thereby forcing a bye-election.

In June, 1943, in one of the most heated bye-elections in the history of the province, Vincent Segur, the C.C.F. candidate, defeated Joseph McKinnon, the nominee of the Coalition Party.⁵⁴ Segur⁵⁵ was born in Iowa in 1887, and, after coming to Canada in 1900, became a locomotive engineer with the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1906. He arrived in Revelstoke in 1913. Originally a Liberal, he was active in trade union circles, and, after the formation of the C.C.F. Party in 1932, had formed the first C.C.F. Club in Revelstoke in 1933. As a C.C.F. candidate, he

50 C.P.G., 1937, p. 395.

51 Ibid., 1938, p. 433.

52 Hereafter referred to as the C.C.F. party.

53 Revelstoke Review, January 21, 1943.

54 Vancouver News-Herald, June 15, 1943.

55 Revelstoke Review, May 22, 1943.

had unsuccessfully contested the provincial riding in the general election of 1933. In 1943 he broke the twenty-seven-year-old grip of the Liberal Party on the Revelstoke riding. He lost his seat in the general election in October, 1945, however, and was again unsuccessful in the general election in June, 1949.

On October 25, 1945, William James Johnson,⁵⁶ a Coalition Party candidate, defeated Segur, his only opponent. Johnson, too, was a locomotive engineer with the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. Born in Ontario in 1888, he had been educated in Enderby, British Columbia. In World War One he served as a captain in the Canadian Army. He was connected with the Conservative Party Association for many years, and unsuccessfully sought election in the general election of 1941 under the Progressive-Conservative standard. He represented Revelstoke until his death in April, 1949.⁵⁷

In the general election in June, 1949, Revelstoke riding elected a native son, Arvid Waldemar Lundell, to the provincial legislature. Then a Coalitionist, Lundell defeated Vincent Segur, the C.C.F. representative, in a two-candidate contest. A member of a pioneer family in Revelstoke, Lundell⁵⁸ was born there in 1899, and attended the local public and high schools. Later, he attended Columbian College, New Westminster, and Queen's

56 C.P.G., 1946, p. 433.

57 Vancouver Province, April 18, 1949.

58 C.P.G., 1951, p. 464.

University, Kingston, Ontario. For short periods he worked for the Imperial Bank of Canada and the Canadian Pacific Railway, but in 1926 he became editor of the Revelstoke Review, and eventually secured control of that newspaper. He has also played a prominent part in weekly newspaper associations in Canada. He has served in several civic groups in Revelstoke, including the Parks Board, the School Board, the City Council and the Board of Trade, and is also a member of many social and communal organizations. In 1935 he first gained prominence, politically, when he became the provincial organizer for the Conservative Party.⁵⁹ Despite his ownership of the only newspaper in Revelstoke, Lundell reported the campaign of 1949 fairly in his columns, and received several verbal bouquets from his political opponents for his objective newspaper coverage of the contest.⁶⁰

In January, 1952, the Coalition Government formed by the Liberal and Conservative parties disbanded, after a partnership of eleven years. On June 12, 1952, after one of the most strenuous political campaigns in provincial history, the voters of British Columbia chose their political representatives. For the first time the electors used a system of alternative voting which, in Revelstoke's case, prevented the results of the election being known until July. Four candidates battled for Revelstoke's one seat. Vincent Segur, the C.C.F. candidate who had been Revel-

59 Vancouver Province, May 8, 1935.

60 Ibid., June 9, 1949.

stoke's representative from 1943 to 1945, defeated A.C. Rutherford, a Liberal candidate, Peer V. Paynter, representing the Social Credit Party, and A.W. Lundell, the former representative, who was seeking re-election as a Progressive Conservative partisan.⁶¹ In the general election of 1953 Segur successfully defended his seat.⁶²

The influence of the railway men of Revelstoke in the field of provincial politics is interesting. With such a large percentage of the population belonging to trade unions, it would be natural to expect the people of the Revelstoke area to have sent several socialists to Victoria. The voting results, therefore, are surprising. From 1886 to 1954 the people of Revelstoke have elected only eight different men to represent them in the provincial legislature, four Conservatives, three Liberals and one member of the C.C.F. party. The Liberal party has represented the area for thirty-five years, the Conservative party for twenty-seven years, and the C.C.F. party for four years. The eight men who have represented the region have included one retired soldier, one lumberman, one merchant, one doctor, one newspaper publisher, one miner and two locomotive engineers. One of the locomotive engineers was a Conservative. The miner, the doctor and the merchant, representing the area for a total of forty-seven years, were all immensely popular with the local residents. The miner ran as a Liberal, but was strongly pro-labour. The doctor was also a Liberal, but, as a surgeon for the Canadian Pacific Railway,

61 Victoria Colonist, July 4, 1952.

62 C.P.G., 1954, p. 478.

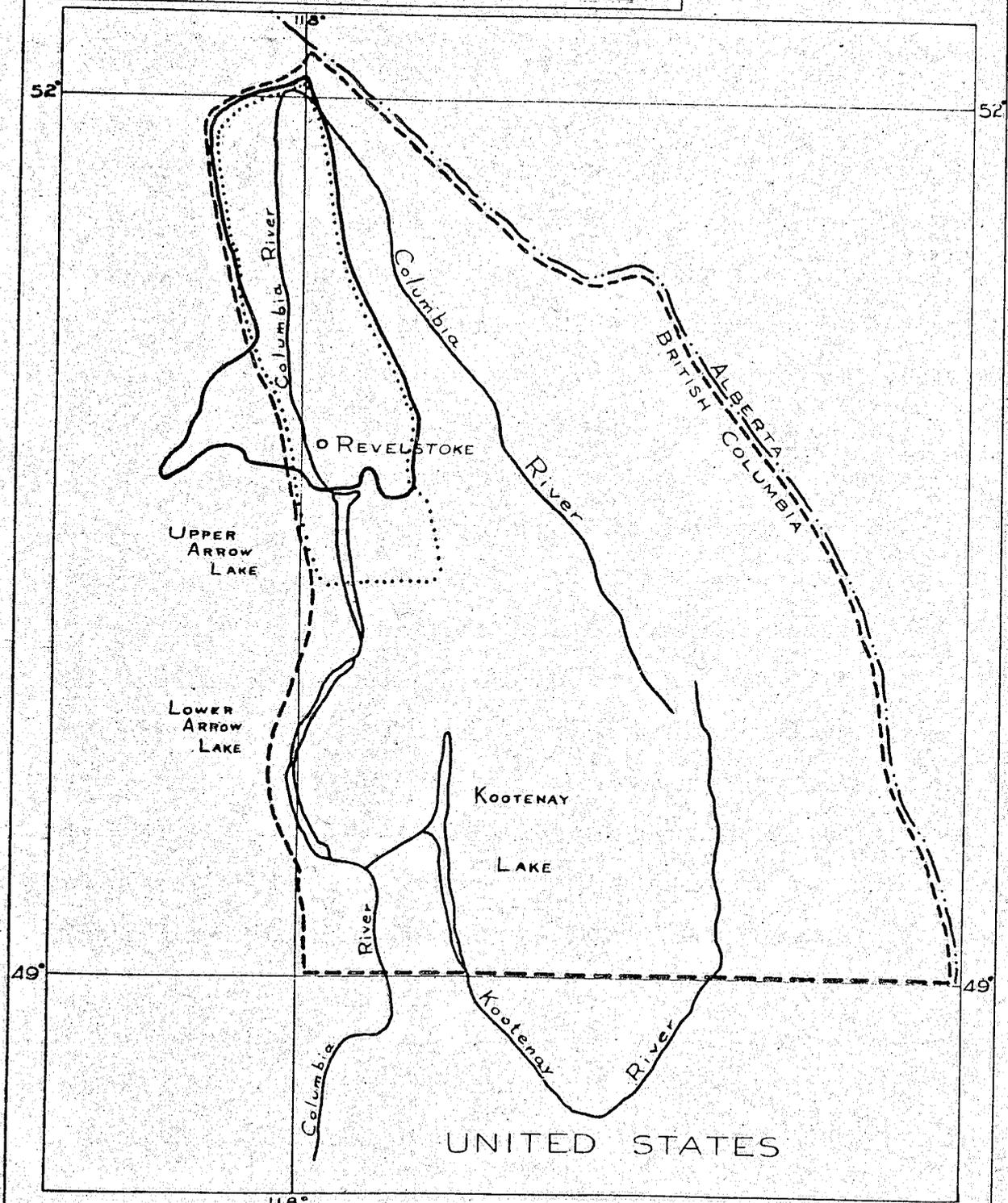
was naturally influenced by his association with railway men. The merchant also worked for the railway company for some years. Actually, five of the eight men, at one time or another in their careers, had considerable contacts with railway and union men, although only one of the five, Vincent Segur, had been a prominent trade unionist. Socialist candidates have offered themselves to the voters of Revelstoke over the years, and, theoretically, would seem to have had good chances of election, but in actual voting only one candidate who has been both a nominal and actual socialist has been elected. On several occasions groups of socialists in Revelstoke have organized for political action,⁶³ but have had little electoral success.⁶⁴

63 See, for example, the accounts of the organizations of Labour and Socialist party locals in: Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, September 13, 1901; and Grantham, Ronald, Some aspects of the Socialist movement in British Columbia, 1898-1933, M.A. thesis, U.B.C., September, 1942, Appendix 3.

64 For a complete tabulation of the results of all provincial general and bye-elections in the constituencies including Revelstoke from 1871 to 1954, see Appendix II. For a map of some of the changes in the boundaries of the ridings, see Illustration VII.

ILLUSTRATION VII

SOME CHANGES IN THE PROVINCIAL ELECTORAL RIDINGS ENCLOSING REVELSTOKE, 1871 - 1954.



LEGEND

- KOOTENAY RIDING, 1871.
- REVELSTOKE RIDING, 1902.
- REVELSTOKE RIDING, 1953.

Chapter Fourteen

Federal politics

When British Columbia entered the Canadian Confederation in 1871, the new province was entitled to send six representatives to the House of Commons in Ottawa. When the federal electoral districts were being drawn up, all the area which now includes the East and West Kootenays, the Boundary region, the locality around Kamloops and the Thompson River, the Okanagan Valley, and the district including the Nicola-Similkameen country, was included in one vast constituency, Yale-Kootenay electoral riding. In the election of 1871 the first and only man to offer himself to the electors of Yale-Kootenay constituency was Captain (later Colonel) Charles Frederick Houghton, a retired British Army officer.¹ An Irishman, Houghton had served in the British Army, and had retired on pension prior to his arrival in Canada in 1863. He had settled in the Okanagan, and at the time of the Yale-Kootenay election in December, 1871, listed his official occupation as "gentleman farmer."

There is an interesting account of the first federal election in Yale-Kootenay riding.² According to the story, Arthur T. Bushby, the Stipendiary Magistrate at Yale, was visited by his friend, R.B. McMicking, in December, 1871. McMicking reminded

¹ Canadian Parliamentary Companion, 1872 (hereafter referred to as C.P.C.), Mortimer, 1872, pp. 184 and 305.

² Vancouver Province, March 11, 1928.

Bushby about the forthcoming election - which Bushby had completely forgotten - and suggested that Bushby check his official correspondence to see when the election was to take place. Bushby did so, and found that the election was supposed to be held that very day. He sent out his constable to assemble as many qualified voters as possible in order to secure nominations. The day was extremely cold, and only two voters, a blacksmith and a roustabout, appeared. After considerable prodding, the blacksmith suggested the name of Captain Houghton, whom he vaguely remembered seeing when Captain Houghton had been passing through Yale to visit a friend in the Okanagan Valley. After the roustabout seconded the blacksmith's nomination, Bushby declared the nominations closed, and thus, by acclamation, secured the election of Captain Houghton. Houghton, supposedly, did not know about his election for some months, and was barely able to reach Ottawa in time for the session of 1872. The story is not completely true. As early as October, 1871, Houghton was inserting notices in newspapers offering himself to the electors of Yale-Kootenay.³ Regardless of how he obtained the nomination, however, Houghton secured the seat, and proceeded to Ottawa as the first Member of Parliament to represent Yale-Kootenay constituency. He went as a supporter of the Conservative government of Sir John A. Macdonald.⁴ He did not seek re-election in the general election of 1872. He later played a prominent

3 Victoria Colonist, October 24, 1871.

4 Loc cit.

part in the organization of the militia in British Columbia, became an aide to Lord Dufferin, the Governor-General of Canada, served with distinction in the Riel Rebellion of 1885, and died in Victoria in August, 1898.⁵

In the election of 1872, two candidates, Edgar Dewdney and Robert Smith, contested the seat. When the first actual electoral contest in Yale-Kootenay constituency was held, Dewdney, the successful candidate, secured forty-three of the sixty-two ballots cast.⁶ Born in England, Edgar Dewdney came to British Columbia in 1859. He played a prominent part in the development of British Columbia prior to the colony's entry into the Canadian Confederation in 1871, having used his talents as a civil engineer to construct the Dewdney Trail from Hope to Princeton in 1860 to give access to the mines of Similkameen, and continuing the trail from Princeton to Wild Horse Creek in 1865.⁷ In addition, he had represented the Kootenay area in the Legislative Council of the Crown Colony of British Columbia.⁸ Dewdney was elected as a supporter of the Liberal government of Alexander Mackenzie, but when he found that government having to delay fulfilling the Terms of Union of 1871, he became a Liberal-Conservative, and gave his allegiance to the Conservatives led

⁵ For further details on Houghton, consult: Ormsby, M.A., "Captain Houghton's exploratory trip, 1864," Okanagan Historical Society, Thirteenth report, 1949, pp. 38-44.

⁶ C.P.C., 1873, p. 305.

⁷ Scholefield and Howay, op. cit., vol. 2, passim.

⁸ C.P.C., 1874, p. 167.

by Sir John A. Macdonald.⁹ Dewdney represented Yale-Kootenay from 1872 to 1879, defeating David Chisholm in the general election of 1874, and winning the Yale-Kootenay seat in 1878 when Macdonald's Conservatives defeated the Liberal government of Alexander Mackenzie. In 1879 Dewdney was appointed an Indian Commissioner, and resigned his seat in Parliament.¹⁰ Besides his representation of Yale-Kootenay in Ottawa and his work on the Dewdney Trail, Edgar Dewdney had a distinguished career elsewhere, carrying out surveys for the Canadian Pacific Railway, being Lieutenant-Governor of the North West Territories from December, 1881, to July, 1888, Federal Minister of the Interior from 1888 to 1892 while he represented the riding of East Assiniboia, and Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia from 1892 to 1897.¹¹

In September, 1879, a bye-election was held in Yale-Kootenay to fill the vacancy caused by Dewdney's resignation. Two candidates, John Trapp and Francis Jones Barnard, offered themselves to the electors. When the votes were counted, Barnard had won.¹² He had come from Ontario to British Columbia in 1859, and, during the Cariboo gold rush in the 1860's, had begun operating his stage coach and express company from Yale to Soda Creek.¹³ He had had previous legislative experience, having been

9 C.P.C., 1879, pp. 141-142.

10 Ibid., 1880, p. 258.

11 Scholefield and Howay, op. cit., vol. 2, passim.; C.P.C., 1897, p. 365.

12 C.P.C., 1880, p. 258.

13 Scholefield and Howay, op. cit., vol. 2, passim.

a Member of the Legislative Council of British Columbia prior to 1871. A Conservative, politically, Barnard supported Macdonald's Government in Ottawa for eight years, winning the general election of 1882 by defeating his two opponents, Forbes George Vernon and James Robinson. Barnard did not seek re-election for Yale-Kootenay constituency in the general election of 1887.¹⁴

In 1887 John Andrew Mara succeeded F.J. Barnard, his father-in-law, as the representative for Yale-Kootenay riding. Mara had originally come overland from Ontario to British Columbia with the famous "Overlander" party of 1862. He also had had previous legislative experience, having first represented Kootenay riding in Victoria from 1871 to 1875, and then the provincial riding of Yale from 1886. From 1883 to 1886 he had been the Speaker of the Legislature of British Columbia. A Conservative, Mara represented Yale-Kootenay riding in Ottawa until 1896.¹⁵ In addition to his legislative interests, he was involved in mill, store and townsite ventures around Kamloops and Revelstoke, and was also prominent in several steamship companies, including the Columbia and Kootenay Steam Navigation Company.¹⁶ When the federal election of 1891 was

14 Further details on Barnard may be found in: C.P.C., 1885, p.86.

15 Ibid., 1891, p. 162.

16 Campbell, B.R., "The Kootenay Mail: Revelstoke's second newspaper," British Columbia Historical Quarterly, vol. 15 (January-April, 1951), p. 8.

being held, Revelstoke's only newspaper, the Kootenay Star, praised Mara for his work in Ottawa, although the Star at the same time admitted that Mara was not personally popular.¹⁷ Mara was re-elected by acclamation. When the election of 1896 took place, however, the political complexion of Revelstoke's newspaper, now the Kootenay Mail, had changed. There were reasons for the shift of political support.

When J.A. Mara was re-elected in 1891, he represented a vast riding, one of the largest, territorially, in Canada. This riding, Yale-Kootenay, had been created in 1871, and proved satisfactory until 1890 because of the sparseness of population in the different portions of the riding.¹⁸ With the steady influx of miners and railway workers into the Kootenays after the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway, however, there was a need for a change in the Kootenay district's representation in Ottawa. Mara found that his huge constituency was too big for him to attend equally to all portions.¹⁹ He also found, to his sorrow, that the interests of Kamloops and Revelstoke, the two major sections of his riding, were often conflicting ones.²⁰ Since his home and business interests were at Kamloops, he spent

17 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, February 14, 1891.

18 The Canadian Parliamentary Guide, 1950 (hereafter referred to as C.P.G.), Ottawa, Mortimer, 1950, p. 326.

19 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, January 13, 1894.

20 Loc cit.

most of his time there, and had to neglect the Kootenay portion of his riding.²¹ His position was worsened by a federal Redistribution Act of 1893 by which the government sought to remedy the discrepancies between the populations of the ridings of Yale-Kootenay and Cariboo by uniting the two districts under the new name of Yale-Cariboo.²² In 1896 Yale-Cariboo riding faced its first general election.

As early as January, 1894, the Kootenay Star had begun to snipe gently at Mara for his apparent neglect of the Kootenay region.²³ Its successor, the Kootenay Mail, was more vigorous in criticizing Mara, particularly about his handling of the question of protecting the crumbling bank of the Columbia River at Revelstoke. Editorially, the Mail said:

There is a wide-spread feeling of anxiety among the people of Revelstoke, equally among Mr. Mara's especial friends, and, in fact, felt and expressed on all sides, that he has a duty to perform to this portion of his district in regard to this matter [river bank protection] that will not admit of delay. And there is a general desire that Mr. Mara should meet the people here in a public meeting when he comes to Revelstoke again, which it is expected will be within a few days, for the purpose of explaining the situation and becoming more intimately acquainted with the views of the people in relation to these matters, which are deemed so vitally important to the town.²⁴

Mara's apparent, but unavoidable, neglect of the Revelstoke area caused him to lose many of his friends in the region, and when the general election battle of 1896 began, the Kootenay

21 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, January 13, 1894.

22 C.P.G., 1950, p. 326.

23 Revelstoke Kootenay Star, January 13, 1894.

24 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, August 25, 1894.

Mail came out openly as a supporter of Hewitt Bostock, the Liberal candidate.²⁵

In 1896 in Canada, in British Columbia, and in Yale-Cariboo the long regime of the Conservatives came to an end. Except for the brief period from 1873 to 1878 the Conservative Party of Sir John A. Macdonald had been in office in Ottawa since 1867. After Macdonald's death in 1891, however, the Conservatives, under various, short-term leaders, had drifted along before a rising storm of protest. Wilfrid (later Sir Wilfrid) Laurier swept into power in 1896, and remained the head of the Liberal Government until 1911.

In Yale-Cariboo Bostock defeated J.A. Mara in 1896, and represented the district until 1900.²⁶ Born in England, Bostock came to Canada in 1893, and settled near Kamloops. A wealthy man, he acquired large land holdings, became interested in mining activities, and also took up newspaper work. He did not seek re-election in Yale-Cariboo in 1900, and in 1904 was appointed to the Senate by the Laurier government.²⁷

In the general election of 1900 William Alfred Galliher, a Liberal, defeated John McKane, a Conservative, and Chris Foley, a Labour candidate, in a fierce electoral battle. When the votes were counted, Galliher had 3,112, Foley received 2,652, and McKane secured 2,583.²⁸ Galliher, born and raised in Ontario,

25 See, for example, the issues of May 30 and June 27, 1896.

26 Campbell, op. cit., p. 8.

27 C.P.G., 1905, pp. 49-50.

28 Ibid., 1901, p. 190.

had studied law in Winnipeg, and eventually settled in Nelson where he became the first president of the Nelson Liberal Association.²⁹ In Revelstoke he was aided in his political fight by the support of the Kootenay Mail.³⁰

As a result of the decennial census of 1901, the federal government passed another Redistribution Act in 1903 which provided for the dividing of the vast Yale-Cariboo riding into two electoral districts, Yale-Cariboo and Kootenay, the latter to include Revelstoke as well as such other centres as Cranbrook, Fernie, Kaslo, Nelson, Rossland, Ymir and Slocan.³¹ In November, 1904, the new riding, Kootenay, returned Galliher to Ottawa. Galliher represented Kootenay for four years, but did not seek re-election in 1908.

In the federal general election of 1908 the increase in the number of ballots cast showed the tremendous increase in the population of the Kootenay area. When Edgar Dewdney defeated Robert Smith in 1872, only sixty-two voters cast ballots in the huge electoral district of Yale-Kootenay.³² In 1908 a total of 6,619 voters cast ballots in the Kootenay electoral riding alone.³³

In 1908 Arthur Samuel Goodeve, the Conservative candidate, defeated his two opponents, Smith Curtis, a Liberal, and W. Davidson, a Socialist. Goodeve, originally a druggist, had come from Ontario to British Columbia. Prior to 1908, he had

29 Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, September 11, 1900.

30 For newspaper comment on the three candidates, consult: Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, September 11, October 11 and November 22, 1900.

31 C.P.G., 1905, p. 181.

32 C.P.C., 1873, p. 305.

33 C.P.G., 1909, p. 178.

held several public offices, being Mayor of Rossland in 1899 and 1900, and also, for a short time, being Provincial Secretary in the McBride government. He was re-elected in the general election of 1911 - when the Conservatives under Robert (later Sir Robert) Borden ousted Laurier's Liberals. In 1912 Goodeve resigned his seat in order to accept a position on the Railway Board of Canada.³⁴

In May, 1912, a Conservative, Robert F. Green, was elected by acclamation in a bye-election to replace Goodeve as Kootenay's representative in Ottawa.³⁵ Green was a pioneer of the Kootenay area.³⁶ Born in 1861 at Peterborough, Ontario, he had entered the service of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company at Winnipeg in 1882. In 1885 he took part in the suppression of the uprising of Louis Riel and the Metis, and in the same year appeared at Revelstoke, operating a general store. He later owned stores at Illecillewaet, Ainsworth and Kaslo. He was Mayor of Kaslo in 1893, 1895 and 1896. From 1898 to 1906 he represented the Kaslo-Slocan region at Victoria, and was Provincial Minister of Lands and Works from 1903 to 1906.

By a Redistribution Act of 1914, the federal government further altered the boundaries of the electoral district which included Revelstoke.³⁷ The riding was divided into Kootenay East and Kootenay West, of which the latter included Revelstoke

34 C.P.G., 1913, p. 547.

35 Ibid., 1912, p. 150.

36 Ibid., 1946, p. 84.

37 Ibid., 1950, p. 327.

as well as such other centres as Nelson, Ymir, Rossland, Slocan and Kaslo. In the general election of 1917, fought on the issue of compulsory military service, Green contested the first election of the new riding, and defeated Winfield Maxwell, a supporter of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and I.A. Austin, a Labour candidate.³⁸ Green remained in the House of Commons until 1921, and then did not seek re-election. In that year he was appointed to the Senate of Canada, and remained a Senator until his death in 1946.³⁹

In the general election of 1921, unrest and dissatisfaction with the two major parties in Ottawa brought about a major upheaval in Canadian politics. William Lyon Mackenzie King led the Liberal Party to victory over the Conservatives led by Arthur Meighen. A third party, however, the Progressives, secured sufficient votes and seats to become the second largest party in the House of Commons. Locally, Kootenay West riding rejected the two Conservative and Liberal candidates, and chose instead Levi William Humphreys, who ran under the Farmer-Labour banner.⁴⁰ Born in Maine, of Welsh parents, Humphreys had come to Canada in 1898, and in 1899 joined the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, subsequently becoming a locomotive engineer. He served with the Canadian Expeditionary Force overseas from 1915 to 1919 in World War One, and entered

38 C.P.G., 1918, p. 229.

39 Ibid., 1946, p. 84.

40 Ibid., 1922, p. 151.

the field of politics in 1921. In the federal election of 1925 he was defeated by W.K. Esling, the Conservative candidate.

Born in 1868 in Philadelphia, William Kemble Esling⁴¹ moved to Olympia, Washington, and, finally, to Trail, British Columbia. For approximately twenty years he worked as a newspaperman, acquiring the ownership of several papers in the Trail-Rossland area. Eventually, he had to retire from active participation in newspaper work because of his failing eyesight. He first entered political life in 1921 as a Member of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, and made a name for himself as a caustic critic of the Liberal government of John Oliver.⁴² In October, 1925, he successfully contested the federal electoral seat of Kootenay West. In that riding he fought and won election campaigns in 1926 and 1930. In the latter year the Conservative Party, led by R.B. Bennett, ousted the Liberal Government, and remained in office until 1935. In 1933 the federal government re-adjusted the boundaries of Canada's political constituencies, creating the new riding of Kamloops, in which Revelstoke was included.⁴³ W.K. Esling continued to represent Kootenay West until 1945, but in the federal general election of 1935, in which Canada, generally, elected a Liberal majority to Ottawa, the voters of Kamloops constituency followed suit, electing T.J. O'Neill, a Liberal, and rejecting G.F. Stirling, the C.C.F. candidate, G.H. Ellis, representing the Reconstruction Party,

41 C.P.G., 1945, p. 149.

42 Vancouver Province, December 2, 3 and 7, 1946.

43 C.P.G., 1936, p. 288.

and W.J. Moffatt, the Conservative contestant.⁴⁴

Born in Winnipeg in 1882, Thomas James O'Neill came with his family to British Columbia in 1884, and in 1889 went to Kamloops.⁴⁵ Educated there, he joined the Canadian Pacific Railway Company in 1900, and subsequently became a locomotive engineer. In the general election of 1940 he successfully defended his seat, but in 1945, by a small plurality, was defeated by E.D. Fulton, the Progressive Conservative candidate. O'Neill lost again to Fulton in 1949.

Edmund Davie Fulton belongs to a family distinguished in the history of British Columbia. Born in 1916 at Kamloops, he is the son of F.J. Fulton, a member of the provincial government of Premier Sir Richard McBride, and is also the grandson and grandnephew of two former premiers of the province, Theodore Davie and A.E.B. Davie. A Rhodes Scholar and a lawyer, he served with the Canadian Army overseas in World War Two, rising to the rank of major. In the federal general election of 1949 he successfully defended his seat.⁴⁶

In 1952 the federal government again transferred Revelstoke to a new riding, Okanagan-Revelstoke, formed as a result of dividing the old, historic boundaries of Yale constituency into two seats, Okanagan-Boundary and Okanagan-Revelstoke.⁴⁷ In the general election in August, 1953, Okanagan-Revelstoke elected George W. McLeod, a representative of the Social Credit Party

44 Revelstoke Review, October 18, 1935.

45 Ibid., September 13, 1935.

46 Ibid., June 30, 1949; C.P.G., 1950, p. 322.

47 C.P.G., 1954, p. 353.

and a former Albertan follower of Alberta's late Premier, William Aberhart.⁴⁸ The Revelstoke section of the new riding voted heavily for the Liberal and C.C.F. candidates, but the Okanagan voters gave McLeod his victory.⁴⁹

The influence of the railway men of Revelstoke in the field of federal politics is strange. Federally, from 1886 to 1954, the Revelstoke region has been represented by one newspaper publisher, two lawyers, one druggist, two locomotive engineers and five business men, one of whom at one time was a railway employee. Revelstoke's eleven representatives at Ottawa have included six Conservatives, three Liberals, one Labour Party member and one member of the Social Credit Party. The total periods of representation of each of the political parties have been: Conservative - forty-one years, Liberal - twenty-two years, Labour - four years, and Social Credit - one year. With such a large percentage of the voting population belonging to trade unions it would be natural to expect the people of the Revelstoke area to have sent more than one Labour Member to Ottawa. The factor of personal popularity of some of the non-trade unionist Members of Parliament, however, must be kept in mind. Four personally popular federal representatives of Revelstoke,⁵⁰ representing the riding for a total of thirty-five

48 Revelstoke Review, August 13, 1953.

49 Loc. cit.

50 W.A. Galliher, a lawyer and a Liberal; R.F. Green, a business man and a Conservative; W.K. Esling, a newspaper man and a Conservative; and E.D. Fulton, a lawyer and a Progressive-Conservative.

years, were able to cut across the natural party lines.

Furthermore, it is both difficult and dangerous to generalize by predicting that a trade unionist will vote for a labour candidate.⁵¹

⁵¹ For a tabulation of the results of all federal general and bye-elections in the constituencies including Revelstoke from 1871 to 1954, see Appendix III.

Chapter Fifteen

Conclusion

The history of the Revelstoke-Big Bend region has been dominated by two main factors: the search for gold along the banks of the Columbia and its tributaries between the Big Eddy, near Revelstoke, and Boat Encampment; and the construction, maintenance and expansion of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Mining activities in the Big Bend in the 1860's brought into the area related enterprises in the form of steamer-operators, road-builders, sawmill-operators and merchants, introduced the administrative officers of the Crown Colony of British Columbia, and, indirectly, contributed much to the knowledge of the topography of the region which was essential before the next major step in the region's development - the coming of the railway - could be taken.

The construction of a transcontinental railway brought the first semi-permanent population to Revelstoke in the early 1880's. One of the major difficulties confronting the town of Revelstoke was the problem created by the varied type of person attracted to the region by the lure of employment on the railway. People of all nationalities came to the area, worked, quarrelled, played and died together. The first generation immigrants were, by turns, clannish and friendly with other

nationalities. Their children conformed to Canadian standards in the outward trappings of speech and dress, and adapted themselves to their physical surroundings. Their grandchildren, except for their names, are indistinguishable from children of parents of British stock. Peoples of Italian, Swedish, British and other racial origins have worked both harmoniously and angrily with each other on railway track gangs, on city councils, on construction work and in social groups. They seem not to have worked well or badly with each other because they were all of one race or another, but because they were typical residents of any town or region. Some of them, probably a larger proportion than in most small towns, have been very community-conscious, working strenuously for the betterment of their town, their friends and their families. Others have been content to let community efforts slide or fail. A Canadian-born son of a Swedish immigrant has been the most successful of Revelstoke's many journalists. Another Swedish family for years operated some of Revelstoke's most prosperous hotels and a contracting firm. An Italian contractor became Mayor of Revelstoke. People of other racial origins have similarly distinguished themselves. Only the Orientals seemed unable to adapt themselves, or failed, as they have failed in so many areas in British Columbia, to have their fellow citizens of "white" racial origins accept them. The results of the intermingling of the many different races are difficult to state clearly. Nevertheless, the intermingling has given the

people of the Revelstoke region, and the town, an atmosphere which is probably not to be found in any other community in British Columbia.

The railway brought people of many nationalities to Revelstoke, and it has helped to sift those nationalities into a homogeneous mass. Italian, Swedish, English and other racial groups have worked together in railway positions, have united with each other in times of conflict with the railway company over better working conditions, have backed community projects in which the railway company has also participated, and, above all, have lived together within earshot of the big, steam and diesel-powered locomotives. Revelstoke is not officially a "company town," but, in practice, almost every resident of the city, in one way or another, derives part or all of his income from the railway company, whether he be a locomotive engineer, a merchant or a civic employee.

Politically, no one seeking or holding public office today in Revelstoke would dream of ignoring or offending seriously the many people who are dependent, directly or indirectly, upon the railway for their livelihood. Many of Revelstoke's public officials, whether in federal, provincial or civic fields, have been railway employees, particularly locomotive engineers, the apparent "elite" of railway operating employees.

Economically, the railway company has influenced Revelstoke's development by providing the payrolls from which come the taxes, on all three governmental levels, to provide public services, buildings and employees. If the railway company were to remove

the divisional point from Revelstoke to a neighbouring community, the city could conceivably dwindle to the size of near-by Donald, a tiny hamlet now but a thriving centre prior to the company's decision to shift its shops from Donald to Revelstoke. When the railway prospered, Revelstoke prospered. When the railway suffered lean years, the people of Revelstoke suffered with it. The depression which rocked the world and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company in the 1930's caused serious hardship in Revelstoke, forcing the unemployed railwaymen either to leave the town or else to go on the relief rolls of the provincial government. Revelstoke's municipal taxrolls, like those of other centres in British Columbia, were soon in a serious state.¹ But the hard core of employees of the company who kept their jobs relieved Revelstoke of some of the utter chaos which confronted some communities in the province with no railways or major industries to support them.

Other industries have come and gone, mining and logging have had their effects upon the economy of the region, but since 1885 the railway has been the dominant factor in the economic growth and prosperity of Revelstoke. From 1885 to 1897 the people of Revelstoke sought to have the facilities of the railway company in the mountain division centred upon Revelstoke. They were successful in 1897; or, rather, perhaps it is best to say that it suited the purposes of the company to

¹ See, for example, the issues for the period from 1931 to 1935 of: Revelstoke, City of Revelstoke financial statements, Revelstoke, n. pub., 1931 to 1935, passim.

construct a sizeable collection of shops in Revelstoke. In 1955 the people of Revelstoke are worried about the company's almost completed programme of conversion to diesel engines, wondering, perhaps, if the hard-won status of a divisional point, with the resulting benefits of railway shops and large payrolls, is to be lost. The diesel-powered engines and trains could bypass Revelstoke entirely, eliminating the jobs of many of the company's employees. The large number of engineers, firemen, trainmen, conductors, mechanics, oilers and switch-yard employees will no longer be required, although large crews of men will still be employed to keep the tracks clear and in working order. The present indications are that the company is going to limit somewhat its activities in Revelstoke, and that the company payrolls will not form as large a proportion of the region's income in 1964 as they did in 1954. Probably some of the railway employees either will be transferred elsewhere or will be forced to seek occupations in other industries, mainly in milling and logging. In the past Revelstoke has sought to enhance its status as a tourist centre, but has always derived only a small portion of its income from the tourist trade.

As a result of Revelstoke's position as a railway centre, it has had to face the further problem of labour-management disputes. These clashes have sometimes been extremely bitter, particularly in the period before 1910. In the past forty years, however, the relations between the Canadian Pacific Railway Company and its employees in Revelstoke have, on the surface at least, been

comparatively peaceful. The railway company has been careful not to clash directly with the unions, and the unions, in turn, have been content to work steadily, but quietly, for increased wages and better working conditions. Both the unions and the company have united to combat one common problem, the improvement of the lot of the unattached male railway employee.

For many years Revelstoke's population included a large number of young, single men employed on the railway. These men banded together in organized groups to amuse themselves. The railway company and the unions recognized the value of these organizations, and encouraged them financially. Such an institution, for example, as the Revelstoke Young Men's Christian Association originated and thrived mainly because of the co-operation of the company, the unions and the townspeople.

Other industries have occupied the attention of the residents of the Revelstoke-Big Bend region. Both before and after the coming of the railway, mining was important in the development of the area. Even today there is still discussion among the people of Revelstoke about the mineral possibilities of the Big Bend. With mining there was a related interest, the question of transportation on the Columbia River above Revelstoke. One of the main reasons for the slowness in the exploitation of the gold rush of 1865 and 1866 and the subsequent collapse of the mining activities in the Big Bend was the difficulty and the expense of transporting men and supplies up the Columbia River. In the post 1885 era the same problem of cheap and regular

transportation existed. For fifteen years after the completion of the railway the Big Bend remained as isolated as ever. From 1901 to 1914 a ship travelled on the Columbia River between Revelstoke and La Porte, but thereafter, until the completion of the Big Bend Highway in 1940, the mining men of Revelstoke again faced their old problem, a means of inexpensive and easy access to their workings. Even today the highway is almost impassable for five months of the year, seriously limiting mining activity.

Logging and sawmilling, too, have aided in the development of Revelstoke, particularly between 1905 and 1910, and have provided considerable sums of money in payrolls and profits for the local inhabitants. There is still a large amount of good timber in the region, almost as much as there ever was, but the mills in the Revelstoke-Arrow Lakes area face the same problem today as the rest of British Columbia's sawmills, the uncertainty of a continuing, large, stable market.

The Revelstoke-Big Bend region has been involved in at least five of the major developments in British Columbia's history. In one such activity, the fur trade, the area, admittedly, served only as a portion of the route which the voyageurs and traders used in their travels. In the development of gold mining in the province, the Big Bend rush was only one of the lesser gold rushes. In the development of the lumber industry to a point pre-eminent in the provincial economy, Revelstoke has served one of the lesser timber-producing regions as a

transportation centre. In the romantic era of the river steamers on the Columbia River, Revelstoke and the Big Bend witnessed their share of the ugly, cumbersome, yet essential, boats churning up and down the river. As a railway town, Revelstoke originated with the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, suffered growing pains with the company, and, today, is dependent, as few other communities in the province are dependent, upon the company for its life blood. If nothing else, this story of Revelstoke's development is an attempt to show how one small community has developed as part and parcel of the development of the railway company.

Appendix IMayors of Revelstoke City, 1899-1954

| | |
|-----------|---------------------------------|
| 1899 | F. McCarty |
| 1900 | A.N. Smith |
| 1901 | T. Kilpatrick and William Brown |
| 1902-1903 | M.J. O'Brien |
| 1904 | H.A. Brown |
| 1905-1906 | John McLeod |
| 1907 | H.A. Brown |
| 1908-1909 | C.F. Lindmark |
| 1910-1911 | Dr. J.H. Hamilton |
| 1912 | Dr. W.H. Sutherland |
| 1913 | T. Kilpatrick |
| 1914 | H.F. McKinnon |
| 1915 | W.A. Foote |
| 1916-1919 | H.F. McKinnon |
| 1920-1922 | Walter Bews ¹ |
| 1922-1924 | O.W. Abrahamson |
| 1925-1929 | H.F. McKinnon ² |
| 1929-1933 | Samuel Needham |
| 1934-1936 | A. Pradolini |
| 1937-1954 | Walter Hardman |

1 Bews resigned before the expiration of his term of office, and was succeeded by O.W. Abrahamson.

2 McKinnon died before his term of office ended, and was succeeded by Samuel Needham.

Appendix II

Results of provincial general and bye-elections in the constituencies
including Revelstoke, 1871-1954.

Abbreviations used

acc. acclamation
 be. bye-election
 C. Conservative
 CCF. Cooperative Commonwealth Federation
 Cln. Coalition
 ge. general election

I. Independent
 L. Liberal
 PP. Provincial Party
 SC. Social Credit
 Soc. Socialist

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Name of constituency</u> | <u>Type of election</u> | <u>Number of candidates elected</u> | <u>Total votes cast</u> | <u>Results by parties</u> | <u>Successful candidates</u> |
|-------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1871 | Kootenay | ge | 2 | 39 | An established Canadian party | J.A. Mara and Charles Todd |
| 1875 | Kootenay | ge | 2 | 63 | label was not used in these provincial constituencies | A.W. Vowell and Charles Gallagher |
| 1876 | Kootenay | be ¹ | 1 | 33 | | W.C. Milby |
| 1878 | Kootenay | be ² | 1 | | until the election in 1900. | R.L.T. Galbraith |
| 1878 | Kootenay | ge | 2 | acc | | Gallagher and Galbraith |
| 1882 | Kootenay | ge ³ | 1 | acc | | Galbraith |
| 1886 | Kootenay | ge | 1 | 185 | | James Baker |
| 1890 | Kootenay West | ge | 1 | 156 | | J.M. Kellie |
| 1894 | North Riding of West Kootenay | ge | 1 | 342 | | Kellie |
| 1898 | Revelstoke Riding of West Kootenay | ge | 1 | 666 | | Kellie |

Appendix II (continued)

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Name of constituency</u> | <u>Type of election</u> | <u>Number of candidates elected</u> | <u>Total votes cast</u> | <u>Results by parties</u> | <u>Successful candidates</u> |
|-------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1900 | Revelstoke Riding of West Kootenay | ge | 1 | 881 | C 513; I 368 | Thomas Taylor |
| 1903 | Revelstoke | ge | 1 | 844 | C 342; L 316; Soc 186 | Taylor |
| 1907 | Revelstoke | ge | 1 | 803 | C 440; L 269; I 94 | Taylor |
| 1909 | Revelstoke | be ⁴ | 1 | 691 | C 559; Soc 132 | Taylor |
| 1909 | Revelstoke | ge | 1 | 1,219 | C 758; L 340; Soc 121 | Taylor |
| 1912 | Revelstoke | ge | 1 | acc | | Taylor |
| 1916 | Revelstoke | ge | 1 | 1,323 | L 802; C 521 | W.H. Sutherland |
| 1920 | Revelstoke | ge | 1 | acc | | Sutherland |
| 1922 | Revelstoke | be ⁵ | 1 | 1,309 | L 1,002; C 307 | Sutherland |
| 1924 | Revelstoke | ge | 1 | 1,831 | L 1,069; C 594; PP 168 | Sutherland |
| 1928 | Revelstoke | ge | 1 | 2,076 | L 1,170; C 906 | Sutherland |
| 1933 | Revelstoke | ge | 1 | 2,694 | L 1,947; CCF 747 | Sutherland |
| 1937 | Revelstoke | ge | 1 | 1,900 | L 1,162; C 533; CCF 205. | Harry Johnston |
| 1941 | Revelstoke | ge | 1 | 2,170 | L 1,065; CCF 678; C 427 | Johnston |
| 1943 | Revelstoke | be ⁶ | 1 | 2,056 | CCF 1,052; Cln 1,004 | Vincent Segur |
| 1945 | Revelstoke | ge | 1 | 2,128 | Cln 1,089; CCF 1,039 | W.H. Johnson |

Appendix II (continued)

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Name of constituency</u> | <u>Type of election</u> | <u>Number of candidates elected</u> | <u>Total votes cast</u> | <u>Results by parties</u> | <u>Successful candidates</u> |
|-------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1949 | Revelstoke | ge | 1 | 2,573 | Cln 1,311; CCF 1,262 | A.W. Lundell |
| 1952 | Revelstoke | ge | 1 | 2,731 | 7 | Vincent Segur |
| 1953 | Revelstoke | ge | 1 | 2,296 | CCF 1,284; L 1,012 | Segur |

- 1 Vowell resigned in 1876, and in the resulting bye-election Milby was successful.
- 2 Milby died in October, 1877, forcing a bye-election.
- 3 In 1879 Kootenay riding lost one seat.
- 4 Necessary because of Thomas Taylor's appointment as Minister of Public Works.
- 5 Sutherland was appointed Minister of Public Works in 1922, forcing an election.
- 6 Necessary because of Johnston's death in January, 1943.
- 7 Because of the use of the alternative ballot system in the general election of 1952, the votes for the different parties cannot be stated easily. On the first count the tally was: CCF 942; L 636; SC 598; C 555. On the third count the tally was: CCF 1,320; L 1,015.

Appendix III

Results of federal general and bye-elections in the
constituencies including Revelstoke, 1871-1954.

Abbreviations used

acc. acclamation
 be. bye-election
 C. Conservative
 CCF. Cooperative Commonwealth Federation
 F-Lab. Farmer-Labour
 ge. General election
 I. Independent

Lab. Labour
 LC. Liberal-Conservative
 LP. Labour-Progressive
 P. Progressive
 R. Reconstruction
 SC. Social Credit
 Soc. Socialist

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Name of constituency</u> | <u>Type of election</u> | <u>Total votes cast</u> | <u>Results by parties</u> | <u>Successful candidates</u> ¹ |
|-------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| 1871 | Yale-Kootenay | ge in B.C. only | acc | | C.F. Houghton |
| 1872 | Yale-Kootenay | ge | 62 | L 43; C 19 | Edgar Dewdney ² |
| 1874 | Yale-Kootenay | ge | 109 | LC 89; L 20 | Dewdney |
| 1878 | Yale-Kootenay | ge | acc | | Dewdney |
| 1879 | Yale-Kootenay | be ³ | 311 | C 212; L 99 | F.J. Barnard |
| 1882 | Yale-Kootenay | ge | 453 | C 266; L 78; I 109 | Barnard |
| 1887 | Yale-Kootenay | ge | acc | | J.A. Mara |
| 1891 | Yale-Kootenay | ge | acc | | Mara |
| 1896 | Yale-Cariboo | ge | 3,303 | L 1,824; C 1,479 | Hewitt Bostock |
| 1900 | Yale-Cariboo | ge | 8,347 | L 3,112; Lab 2,652; C 2,583 | W.A. Galliher |
| 1904 | Kootenay | ge | 4,957 | L 2,551; C 1,784; I 622 | Galliher |
| 1908 | Kootenay | ge | 6,619 | C 3,109; L 2,173; Soc 1,337 | A.S. Goodeve |

Appendix III (continued)

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Name of constituency</u> | <u>Type of election</u> | <u>Total votes cast</u> | <u>Results by parties</u> | <u>Successful candidates</u> ¹ |
|-------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---|---|
| 1911 | Kootenay | ge | 7,152 | C 4,113; L 3,039 | Goodeve |
| 1912 | Kootenay | be ⁴ | acc | | R.F. Green |
| 1917 | Kootenay West | ge | 8,511 | C 5,377; L 1,735; Lab 1,399 | Green |
| 1921 | Kootenay West | ge | 9,797 | F-Lab 4,790; C 3,890; L.W. Humphreys L 1,117 | |
| 1925 | Kootenay West | ge | 10,499 | C 5,720; F-Lab 4,779 | W.K. Esling |
| 1926 | Kootenay West | ge | 11,504 | C 6,247; L 5,257 | Esling |
| 1930 | Kootenay West | ge | 14,066 | C 7,699; L 5,938; F-Lab 429 | Esling |
| 1935 | Kamloops | ge | 10,469 | L 3,896; C 2,863; CCF 2,633; R 1,077 | T.J. O'Neill |
| 1940 | Kamloops | ge | 13,449 | L 5,621; C 4,290; CCF 3,538 | O'Neill |
| 1945 | Kamloops | ge | 13,289 | C 4,346; L 4,222; CCF 4,055; LP 666 | E.D. Fulton |
| 1949 | Kamloops | ge | 19,172 | C 7,682; L 6,399; CCF 5,091 | Fulton |
| 1952 | Okanagan-Revelstoke | ge | 11,531 | SC 3,511; L 3,203; CCF 2,317; C 2,106; LP 394 | G.W. McLeod |

¹ At no time has this constituency elected more than one member.

Appendix III (continued)

2 Dewdney was elected as a Liberal but became a Liberal-Conservative when the Liberal Government failed to begin construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

3 Dewdney resigned in 1879 to become an Indian Commissioner, forcing a bye-election to fill the vacancy.

4 Goodeve resigned his seat in 1912 to accept a position on the Railway Board of Canada.

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In the preparation of this thesis two large sources have contributed the bulk of the material. The first of these was the collection of Revelstoke newspapers on file in the Provincial Library, Victoria, B.C. The Kootenay Star from 1890 to 1894, the Kootenay Mail from 1894 to 1905, the Mail-Herald from 1906 to 1917, and the Review from 1916 to 1954 were invaluable. The Victoria Colonist from 1858 to 1890 was also most useful. Scanning newspapers covering a period of almost 100 years was an exhausting and time-consuming task, but was also a most interesting and rewarding effort. Without those most complete runs of newspapers, this thesis would not exist.

The second large source of useful material was that of the printed and manuscript documents of the provincial and federal governments in the Provincial Library and Archives. Government documents are somewhat frightening because of their enormous bulk. The indexes and catalogues in the Provincial Library and Archives, however, were of great assistance, and some government departments, notably the provincial Department of Mines and the federal Geological Survey Branch, have prepared valuable indexes to their own published documents.

A third useful and authoritative source of material was the collection of theses on British Columbia subjects produced by students of the Department of History at the University of British Columbia. This collection was an excellent guide to source material.

In addition to the above mentioned sources, pamphlet and periodical literature, printed works on general and specific subjects and private manuscripts were of assistance. Mention must also be made of the four volume history of British Columbia prepared by E.O.S. Scholefield and F.W. Howay. With all its faults, its dated "slants" and its emphasis on political affairs, it is still the standard history of the province, and has been a boon to the writer of this thesis and to many other students.

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A good source of information on the Revelstoke area in a period when no Revelstoke paper was published.

Revelstoke Argus, August 6, 1913.

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Revelstoke Herald, 1897-1905.

Primarily interested in promoting the welfare of the railway employees.

Revelstoke Kootenay Mail, 1894-1905.

A sober and conservative paper.

Revelstoke Kootenay Star, 1890-1894.

Revelstoke's first newspaper. Vigorously independent.

Revelstoke Mail-Herald, 1906-1917.

Conservative.

Revelstoke Observer, 1908-1909.

Radical reform paper, with definite axes to grind.

Revelstoke Review, 1916-1954.

Originally Liberal, it gradually swung to the position of independent, and remains so today.

Victoria Colonist, 1858-1890.

The only source of information on the Big Bend for a long period.

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Begg, Alexander, History of British Columbia from its earliest discovery to the present time, Toronto, Briggs, 1894.

Once a highly regarded work, but now obsolete.

Howay, F.W., Sage, W.N., and Angus, H.F., ed., British Columbia and the United States; the north Pacific from fur trade to aviation, Toronto, Ryerson, 1942. (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Division of Economics and History, The relations of Canada and the United States.)

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