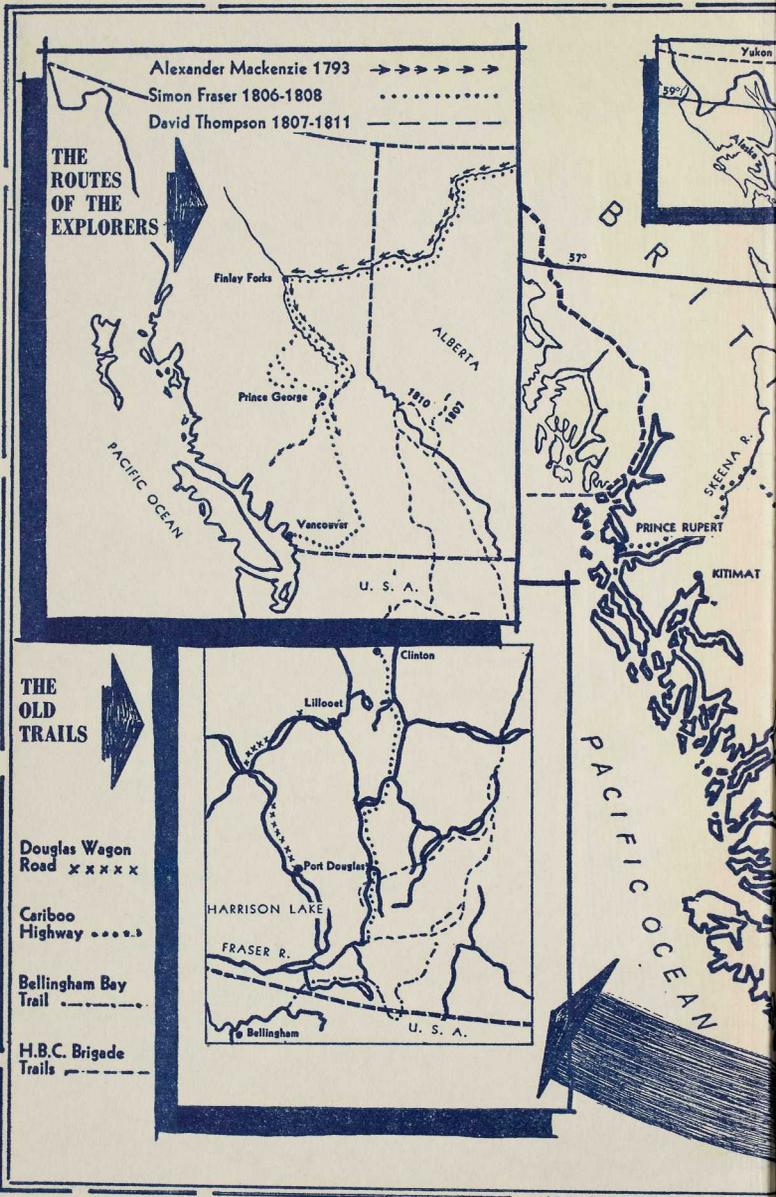


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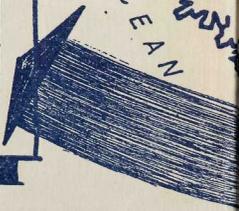
**THE ROUTES OF THE EXPLORERS**

Alexander Mackenzie 1793 →→→→→  
 Simon Fraser 1806-1808 .....  
 David Thompson 1807-1811 - - - - -

**THE OLD TRAILS**

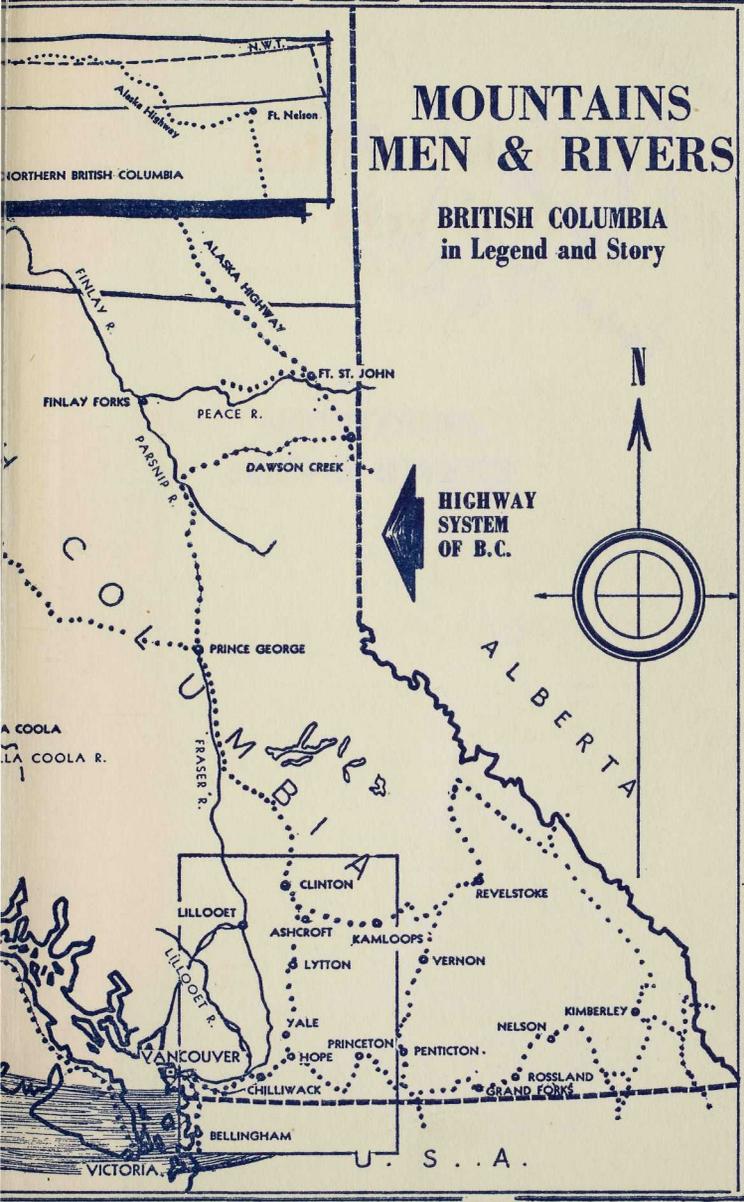
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 H.B.C. Brigade Trails - - - - -

PACIFIC OCEAN



# MOUNTAINS MEN & RIVERS

BRITISH COLUMBIA  
in Legend and Story



presented to

by

V. R. Wickbatt

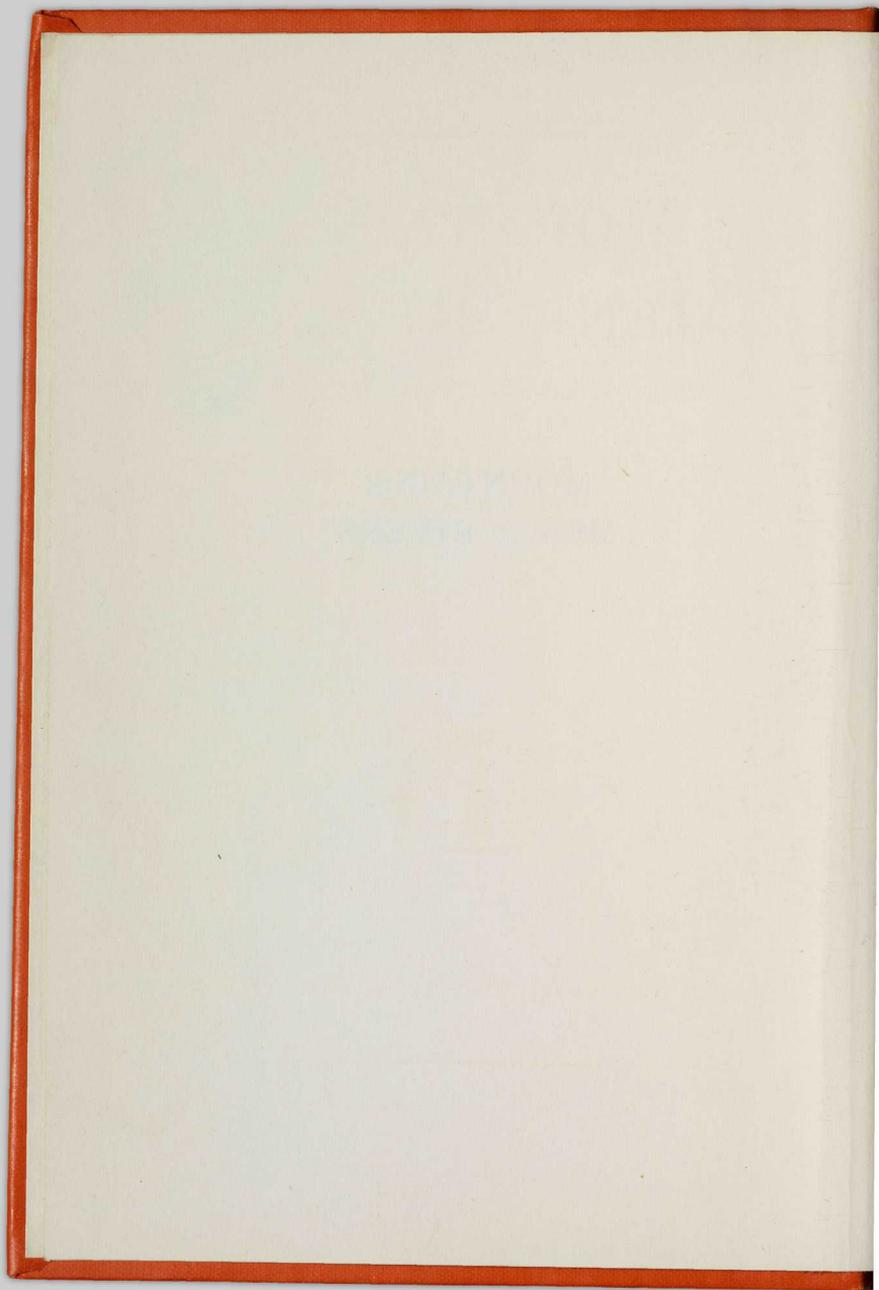
Sept 21st 1955.

The Hon. official

Mayor

J. D. Arey

MOUNTAINS,  
MEN & RIVERS



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# MOUNTAINS, MEN & RIVERS

*British Columbia in Legend and Story*

J. H. STEWART REID

*Professor of History, United College, Winnipeg*



THE RYERSON PRESS ~ TORONTO

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*Published 1954*

PRINTED AND BOUND IN CANADA  
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## *Foreword*

IN MOST CASES, it seems to me, an introduction, a foreword, a preface, or whatever it may be called, is used for but two purposes. In the first place an author uses it to thank all those "without whose interest and encouragement etc. etc." For the ineptitude of this little book, no one is to blame but myself, although my good friend, Dr. W. N. Sage, was in part responsible for its beginning in the essays which he used to demand from me. In the second place, an author uses the introduction as a sort of bridge to the reviewer, for in it he usually provides a succinct statement of the contents and thus makes it possible for the reviewer to write his notice without needing to read the book. This is a very valuable tradition, and one which I would not dream of altering. I find it a little difficult, however, to tell the reviewer just what this book is; perhaps it would be easier to tell what it is not. In the first place, it is not a history of British Columbia, for such a history would need to include a great deal that I have deliberately omitted. It is not a travel book. In it we will not, I hope, "leave the quaint little village of Tweedledum and travelling east for umpteen miles come to the quaint little village of Tweedledee." Nor is it a so-called "colour" book, for the events which are herein described were real events, and the people real people.

Really, I suppose, this book has only two reasons for existence. In the first place its writing provided for me a reasonable sort of excuse for many summers of travel and loafing and fishing in certain favourite spots in British Columbia. Even the children understood that while other

fathers were off on fishing trips, their father was "doing research!" The second reason for the book's existence is perhaps a sounder one—a sincere hope that it may bring to the attention of some more skilled craftsman than I am, the rich mine of material for historian, novelist, dramatist, or just plain journalist, which exists in the story of British Columbia.

—J. H. S. R.

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- Close-up view of Hell's Gate.
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Kitimat smelter as it appears today.

View of Kitimat smelter looking east.

O N E

*The Sea of Mountains*

AN OLD FRIEND and fishing companion, one who has lived in British Columbia most of his life and has left it occasionally only so that he might sneer at other places, was very skeptical when I told him about this book. "What can you say about B.C.?" he asked. "It's just rocks and bush and rivers!" And very right he was. But he knows, and I know, and every visitor to B.C. very soon knows, that there is this more to be said. The "rocks" of British Columbia are the largest and most spectacular mountain mass in the world, the "bush" is endless mile after endless mile of the grandest forests of the tallest trees on this continent, and the rivers are the wildest, most vicious torrents that ever defied human beings and all their works.

Its 360,000 square miles, almost all of them standing on edge, offer the most breath-taking scenic beauty. But there is more here than simply beauty and the province deserves more than merely to be looked at. For its beauty is spread over the surface of staggeringly rich deposits of mineral wealth ranging from iron to gold. In most cases the power to dig and grind and process those minerals is there too, rushing along with the white water of its riverways. Those rivers, and the off-shore coastal waters, are the breeding grounds for the countless millions of salmon, cod and halibut which in 1951 provided about 85 million dollars worth of fish products—just about half of the total production for the whole of Canada. Along the deep valleys and rocky coasts of British Columbia grow the forests of fir and cedar, spruce and

hemlock, which have supported since its beginning one of the staple industries of the province. In 1951 B.C. mills produced just exactly half of the total of all lumber products for Canada. Add to these industries the very significant new developments of minerals and power, such as the 600 million dollar aluminum and power project at Kitimat, and the spectacular increase in manufacturing, from a total production in 1939 worth a quarter billion dollars, to a total production in 1951 worth about one and a quarter billion. The picture is a most impressive one. Small wonder that the *Canada Year Book* notes gravely that "the importance of British Columbia's resources to Canada's future economic development, is only now being dimly realized."

But neither scenery nor investment possibilities, neither tons of ore, nor board feet of lumber, nor cases of canned salmon, can provide an accurate measure by means of which to compare British Columbia with other provinces. Its story too, is as well worth the telling as that of any of the "far-flung" corners of the globe. In fact, the long history of the white man's advance across the North American continent contains no more romantic chapter than that which tells the story of the men who pioneered the Canadian far-west.

Perhaps the most convenient way of beginning to tell that story, to American readers at least, is to say that in a variety of ways, British Columbia is Canada's California. The analogy which is thus suggested is one which must not be pushed too far. The successful prairie farmer from Saskatchewan retires to an acre in Burnaby or Vancouver Island just as his Kansas counterpart retires to a bungalow in Los Angeles. And Chambers of Commerce in both Victoria and Vancouver have produced a whole literature founded upon mean average winter temperatures, just as similar bodies used to do in Californian cities. Then, too, architectural styles are perhaps more extreme in British Columbia than elsewhere; in fact the California influences are most obvious here.

Another obvious analogy lies in the rather startling development during the last decade of splinter religious

groups, some of them almost as bizarre in their way as those in California. And that love of educational experimentation, of progress rapidly and in all directions at once, which has characterized California's school systems, has on occasion left its mark in B.C. too.

Physically the similarity between the two is much less apparent. In its topography British Columbia is perhaps like no other area on the continent. From its eastern boundary right down to the Pacific march row after row of rugged mountain ranges, and the mountains whose sides plunge down into the sea are almost as high as those in the Rockies 600 miles to the east. Because of its terrain the problem of transportation has always been British Columbia's worst problem; it is so today. As a result, the American tourist who enters the province from Seattle on Highway 99, may drive his automobile across the border and on some thirty-two miles into the city of Vancouver. There his northward road ends. There are some 600 miles of coast, one of the loveliest coasts in the world, beyond that point, but he will see it only from the deck of a steamer. Driving his car he can only go eastward through the Fraser Valley, then north through the great canyons of the Fraser to Prince George. Beyond that point only two major roads run, in a region of more than 150,000 square miles of the wildest and least known land on this continent. The whole province includes an area about three times as great as that of California; in it live about a million people—about one-third as many as in the Los Angeles area alone.

Perhaps it is in the mind of the historian that the analogy between British Columbia and California seems most apt. In the case of both regions the Spaniards were first on the scene; in both, the maritime traders came along to push the Dons out. In both cases the discovery of gold brought about a startling development; in both cases the existence of a colony founded on gold and sitting far out on the Pacific coast posed the problem of adequate communications through a mid-continental wilderness. And in both cases the building of

these communications opened to settlement the vacant lands of the midwestern prairies, and the frontier moved back from the coast again to the interior of the continent.

Take a look at a physical map of British Columbia. In the words of one early traveller you will see nothing but a "sea of mountains." Explorers, fur-traders, and gold-seekers alike, were all forced to follow the rivers in order to penetrate the forbidding mass of snow-covered peaks which confronts the traveller entering the province either from east or west. The river paths were not easy paths, however, and the explorer of these regions was never able to take his ease in his canoe or on a raft. Not in these waters! In fact, it was not even possible for him to use the safer, if more laborious method of pushing or poling his craft upstream. In the whole 750 miles of the Fraser River's length, for example, there are but two stretches where such passage is either safe or practicable for more than a few hundred yards. The Columbia, in its Canadian journey, at least, is little better. And most of the other rivers, such as the Stikine and the Skeena, defy any kind of navigation. To follow the banks of one of these streams on horseback or afoot is in most cases only a little less than impossible. In every case the story is the same. Throughout its length the river is constantly being compressed by the precipitous rock walls of one or other of its "Big Canyons," and on their sides only the most daring and the most agile can find a foothold. Narrow ledges in the rock provide a precarious path in places, but above the path tower the great cliffs, and below them, usually far below them, thunders the river with such force that wall, ledge, and traveller alike, seem perpetually aquiver. The fact is that nowhere in the world have mountains and rivers so cleverly contrived together to mount obstacles in the path of advancing pioneers. That they conquered these obstacles, and founded a province, was the achievement of the men and women who created British Columbia.

Fortunately for the historian, and for the tourist too if he has knowledge enough about the roads he is travelling, the highways of British Columbia follow in the main the historic

paths, the paths of the Indians, of the fur brigades, of the gold miners, and of the timber cruisers. As a result the tourist can be more than tourist here; he can be student of history as well. And while he travels and observes, he can if he cares, enjoy some of the best fishing still to be found on the continent!

An ever-increasing number of the visitors to B.C. are finding what in fact is probably the best way to enter the province, by boat from San Francisco or Portland, or more commonly, by way of the ferry service from Seattle or from Port Angeles. This approach brings the tourist first of all to the city of Victoria, on Vancouver Island. In the old days (before the war, that is) the Chamber of Commerce used to boast that here was a "little bit of old England," and to some extent the boast was justified. Little now remains of the studied leisure which once distinguished a city most of whose offices opened at ten in the morning, and stopped for tea in the afternoon. Regrettably, it is now just as up-and-at-'em as any other B.C. city. It has, of course, the beauty of a setting which puts the sea at the foot of almost every street. Its harbour has all the romance which one associates with ships and sailors, and seagulls, and low tide smells. Its parks, particularly Beacon Hill Park, are as beautiful, and its homes and its gardens—most of all its gardens—as impressive as one can find anywhere. And of course the climate, the softest, most equable known to mankind! Fine salmon fishing is at the city's doorstep and a few miles up island there are trout streams which never seem to become fished out. There is always, too, the possibility of catching sight of Victoria's most famous citizen, the sea-monster "Caddy" who lives in the bay waters of Cadboro Bay and occasionally lifts his scaly head and forty-foot body out of the water to frighten fishermen and entice tourists. Apart from these few attractions, however, Victoria has little to recommend it.

From Victoria you may, if you choose, either take the C.P.R. steamer direct to Vancouver, or you can drive by way of the Saanich peninsula to the town of Sidney and thence across the gulf of Georgia. But if you do, you will miss one

of the best parts of the province. Far better to drive farther up island by way of the famous Malahat Drive, for you will find this one of the loveliest of the lovely expeditions which await the traveller in British Columbia. The road takes you past the little towns of Cobble Hill, and Duncan's, and Cowichan, past mail-boxes bearing the names of enough retired rear-admirals and brigadier-generals to see us through still another war, through the sawmill town of Chemainus and on to the coal-mining cities of Ladysmith and Nanaimo and Wellington. Curiously, these places lack the grime and the dust of the typical coal mining town. It must be the rain and the sea at the doorstep which combine to keep streets clean and the air clear. In Nanaimo there is at least one "must" for the tourist—the bastion of the old Hudson's Bay Company fort, built in 1853 to protect its new coal mining operations there. The bastion now houses a museum, containing many interesting bits of early history, all in the care of a curator whose grandfather was in charge of the Company's first coal mining venture here.

From Nanaimo you may ship your automobile by ferry to the mainland. ("Please make reservations in plenty of time," begs the tourist literature, and this is one piece of advice you will be well advised to take.) Or you may go on. For another hundred miles the Island Highway follows the shore north, through the resort areas of Qualicum and Parksville, past the coal mines of the Comox, Cumberland and Courtenay region. You may see off to the west the heights of Forbidden Plateau, a beautiful region but taboo according to Indian legend. It seems that once, faced with attack from mainland tribes, the Island Indians bundled their women and children off to a hiding place on the plateau. But when the battle was over and the victorious warriors went to reclaim their families, all had vanished without a trace. From then on no Indian would approach the place. If you can face rough going in some places you should brave the taboo, for Forbidden Plateau is one of the most beautiful, most unspoiled parks on the continent. The Island Highway ends, for tourist purposes,

at Campbell River. People live here, some of them quite ordinary people, and it is rumoured that some of them are engaged in quite ordinary occupations such as lumbering and mining. If you are a fisherman of course, there is really only one thing at Campbell River. Off the mouth of the river itself lurks the salmon—the tyee salmon—the biggest, toughest, most belligerent fish on the coast. Here the aristocrat is neither the oldest resident nor the richest. He is the man (women qualify too, on occasion) who has caught a forty pounder on light tackle, is consequently a member of the Tyee Club, and wears a silver button on his shirt to prove it!

But we are spending far too much time on the doorstep of the province. By ferry from Victoria, or Sidney, or Nanaimo the traveller crosses over to its front door, the city of Vancouver. No little bit of England this! By long odds this is the most American of all Canadian cities and it possesses all the virtues, and all the faults which that statement implies. Its tourist accommodation, for example, is better than that of any other city in Canada, but you get it in the form of pink and lime green bungalows, with blinking neon lights, flashing arrows, and beckoning fingers.

Bathing beaches almost encircle the city, and ski lodges cling to the sides of the mountains which lie just across the inlet from the business district. Every civic-minded resident of Vancouver at least knows some one who has been swimming in English Bay, and skiing up on Grouse Mountain, both in the same afternoon.

From Vancouver there is only one road for the tourist, the road east. Through New Westminster (its citizens call it the Royal City because Queen Victoria personally named it) the highway runs across the river and up through a valley which is one of the most productive mixed farming areas in the world. If the nineteenth century Englishman's dream of "two acres and a cow for abundant living" ever has come true it is surely here. Through the garden city of Chilliwack, where every field seems crowded with sleek, seductive-looking Jersey cows, the road runs on to Hope. Here is the place where the

Fraser River makes its final escape from the mountains, where it has broadened out to become a navigable river, with fishing boats and tugs and booms of logs and pleasure craft bustling about on its surface. The river looks wide and relatively peaceful here, but don't let its quiet deceive you; it is still strong enough, and fast enough to pour past Hope the almost unbelievable volume of eight and one half billion cubic feet of water each day of the year!

Here at Hope, too, the highway branches. One road, the older one, runs on north through the canyons to Yale and Boston Bar and Lytton. This last town lies on a flat bench just at the junction of the Thompson and the Fraser; here the two transcontinental railways which have been following the Thompson, one on each side, perform a sort of stately whooping crane dance step across the canyons of the two rivers, to emerge each one on the opposite side of the Fraser itself. Here too the old highway divides, with one road running up the Thompson to Ashcroft and then along the Buonaparte valley to the "junction" city of Clinton. The other road follows the Fraser River and clings to its rock walls all the way to the city of Lillooet. For twenty miles more the highway still follows the Fraser, until apparently discouraged by its steep climb over Pavilion Mountain, it swings off to the east past the little gem of Kelly Lake and on to Clinton and the junction with the Cariboo Highway proper.

From Clinton the road runs on past the famous mile-houses which used to provide rest and accommodation for the gold-miner on his way to the strike in the Cariboo. Finally it swings back west to meet the Fraser again at Williams Lake and Soda Creek. On the way north the highway is joined, usually at the mile-houses, by roads which twist off to the east into the famous Cariboo lakes, to Bridge, or Deka, or Timothy, or Horse, or Canim, or Mahood Lakes, where live the fattest, firmest trout in the world.

From Soda Creek the Cariboo Highway follows the Fraser again past Alexandria, and on to Quesnel. There it meets the road coming in from the old gold-fields of the Cariboo and

the town of Barkerville, and then shoots straight north to Prince George. Here is modern progress, for this is the junction point with the province's very newest roads, with Highway 16 which veers off to the northwest to Prince Rupert, and with the John Hart Highway which eventually links B.C. with the Peace River country and with the Alaska Highway. Here too, just across the river one can find a link with the past, for there stood old Fort George, the post from which Simon Fraser set off on his journey to the Sea.

If, instead of turning north at Hope to follow the Cariboo Highway, you keep on east from that point, you will be travelling over the latest of B.C.'s all-weather, first class highways, and the one which has the Travel Bureau just bursting with pride. It is a magnificent road by any standard. The route follows the Coquihalla River, climbs over the mountains through Manning Park, then runs along the Similkameen to Princeton, and across still more mountains to the Okanagan valley and the fruit towns, Osoyoos, Oliver, Keremeos, Penticton, Summerland and Kelowna. To the original beauty of mountain and lake, and there was plenty of it in this valley, man has brought irrigation and fruit trees. To see the Okanagan orchards in the bloom of early May or at picking time in late August is worth many miles of travel.

From Osoyoos, if you still have vacation time left, you can follow Highway 3 still travelling due east. Perhaps east is hardly the direction; for a few miles at least the road seems to go straight up faster than it goes east. One result, however, is that only a few miles from Osoyoos you can pull your car off to the side of the road and see perhaps the most magnificent panorama north of the Grand Canyon. Miles away to the south you see Oroville and the state of Washington, while to the north stretches mile after mile of valley, orchard, and lake.

Over high plateau the road runs on to Greenwood and Grand Forks. The former is a city which enjoyed a boom in the nineties as a result of mining activity, then became a ghost town, then revived when large numbers of Japanese were "deported" there from the strategic coastal cities during the

war, then almost died again, and is now, so the residents claim, just teetering on the brink of another mining boom. At Grand Forks you meet your first real disappointment on B.C. highways, for the road over the Cascades to Trail is not quite what your tires will now have become accustomed to. In fact, most local residents prefer to "jink down to Kettle Falls" in Washington, and then back over the border again at Northport and thence up to Rossland and Trail. You are back now on Highway 3 again, running north through the Kootenay valley. Trail itself is the "Kootenay Kapital" according to the sign on one roadside coffee stand; one can only hope that the association of ideas with Karl Marx was purely accidental, since the "city in a hole in the ground" is the home of happy big business, the centre of operations for the giant Consolidated Mining and Smelting Corporation. From Trail the road runs through a region made more famous by the Doukhobors than by great corporations. Castlegar, Brilliant, Slocan and Nelson are names which are often on front pages of recent years. I must add here, however, that although I have driven through the area many times, always with both eyeballs hanging well out, I have yet to see one of the Doukhobor nudist demonstrations. Other travellers, apparently, have all the luck!

Twenty miles from Nelson you ship your car by ferry across the Kootenay Lake and then turn south to run down the opposite shore to Creston. In June and again in September, remember that in the lake are the same big trout which win boats and outboards and tackle for those who catch them in Lake Pend Oreille and Lake Coeur d'Alene down in Idaho. From Creston the highway runs east again for twenty odd miles, swings north to follow Moyie Lake to Cranbrook, then east again to the mining towns of Fernie and Natal and Michel and over the Crow's Nest Pass into Alberta. For a road which is supposed to be crossing the Rocky Mountains it is an astonishingly straight and level trip; in fact, after much of what has gone before, this part of the highway is a decided anticlimax.

From its beginning at Hope, Highway 3 performs a sort of jitterbug dance with the International Boundary as its partner, at times almost embracing it, then whirling off north for fifty or sixty miles, then coyly edging back again. It is in fact, a good introduction to Canada for Americans, for this is the typical Canadian attitude to most things American. And while it jiggles to and from the 49th parallel it bounces up and down too. Between Hope and the Alberta boundary there are no fewer than seven "summits", and the first one, thirty-six miles out of Hope, is only fifty feet lower than the last one, the Crow's Nest Pass which takes you over the Rockies themselves into Alberta. Most tourists, naturally, come up from the south, from Glacier Lake National Park in Montana, or from Idaho by way of U.S. Highway 189, or from Spokane in Washington, and are apt to think of Highway 3 as the obvious road for them to take. They need not, however, for from Cranbrook they can travel north over a gravel road to Golden and the Big Bend Highway. Or from Nelson they can make their way by road and ferry down Arrow Lake to Arrowhead and Revelstoke where they join Highway 1. From the Osoyoos-Keremeos road they can strike north to Penticton, surely the only city in the world with a lake at both front and back doors, and thence north through the Okanagan to Kelowna, to Vernon and on to Salmon Arm. From Princeton they can drive up to Merritt and through the cattle ranges of the Nicola Valley either to Kamloops or to Spence's Bridge on the Cariboo Highway. Connecting all these points is the northern east-west highway from Revelstoke to the Cariboo Highway at Cache Creek, still designated Highway 1 and still officially the Trans-Canada highway, even though geography is against it.

If you are planning to see B.C. you will have gathered from all this that B.C. is as yet not blessed with a very impressive network of good roads. This is true, of course. The province has now a total of some 22,000 miles of roads, of which 2,500 are hard-surfaced, and another 8,000 gravelled. Now 10,500 miles of good road in an area as big as California, Oregon and

Washington combined, is hardly an imposing network. But still there is this to be said. Wherever the roads are, they are good. Amazingly good, in fact, when one considers the almost fantastic difficulties which confront the engineer here. In some parts of the Fraser Canyon section of the Cariboo Highway, for example, costs of recent reconstruction ran as high as a million dollars per mile! To adapt to B.C.'s highways Doctor Johnson's famous remark about women preachers, the wonder often is not that they are so good, but that they exist at all.

A glance at the road map will show that B.C.'s roads, few as they are, are laid out in a sort of horizontal ladder arrangement, with two east-west highways as the sides, and the north-south roads, following the trenches between mountain ranges as the rungs. Such an arrangement makes possible a wide variety of circular tours starting from almost any point on the whole system. One thing will impress you no matter what sort of trip you take. Wherever you go on the roads of B.C., the wilderness is never far from you. Even from Vancouver's bustle an hour's boat ride will put you on a lonely coast, and an hour's car ride will take you to the sides of mountains and of streams that are as if man had never been. Last of all, the roads of British Columbia are still the roads which the explorer took; geography laid down the same harsh rules for the railway builder and the highway engineer that it laid down a century and a half ago for Mackenzie and Fraser and Thompson. Thus, when you travel the new highways which the engineer has laid down remember that here you can travel in time as well as in space.

T W O

*The Strait of Anian*

SINCE all roads in British Columbia lead to the city of Vancouver, it is almost inevitable that the visitor will be urged some time during his stay to take "one of the boat trips." Steamship companies offer a wide variety of excursions, from a three or four hour sail up Burrard Inlet's north arm, or the day trip up Howe Sound to Squamish or up the inside coast to Jervis Inlet, to the week-long cruise around Vancouver Island, or even—a favourite holiday for Vancouverites themselves—the voyage to Alaska. Any one of these expeditions, short or long, will be worth while in itself, for the inland coastal waters of the Gulf of Georgia and its entering straits are as beautiful as any in the world. And as interesting, too. Relaxing in his deck chair the tourist can retrace the paths of those who began to write the history of this coast. The very names of the bays and inlets and islands, recited aloud, will serve as a sort of announcer's prologue to a radio drama on the discovery of the coast. The Indians themselves left some names which the whites have as yet neglected to alter, names such as Kitsilano and Capilano, Squamish, Nimpkish, Kyuquot and Clayoquot. Lovely names all, no matter how they are pronounced! The Spanish explorers left their marks too; the tourist can pinpoint on his map as he passes them in the gulf, the islands Galiano, Valdez, and Gabriola. Farther north there is Sonora Island and Esperanza Inlet and Cape Mendocino. Captain Cook left his own name on the coast, and the names of many of his officers; so did Captain Vancouver; so too did the maritime fur traders of all

nationalities who ravaged these bays and inlets of their seal and otter populations.

It was the Spaniards who were first among the whites to push into the waters which the tourist sees today, the Spaniards who had already made that first proud claim to "all the shores" washed by the great ocean which Balboa first viewed in 1513. For two and a half centuries after that date the authorities in Spain made only half-hearted attempts to explore the northern part of the vast areas which they claimed. Perhaps, indeed, they discouraged such exploration, and certainly they carefully guarded from publicity the records of any voyages. Their attitude is easy to explain. Legend had it that somewhere along the northern coast, somewhere between latitudes 48° and 52° N., lay the entrance to the Strait of Anian, a passage which would lead its explorer northeastward into the waters of the Atlantic. In other words, the strait was the western exit of the Northwest Passage to the Orient. By 1525 the belief that such a passage existed was so wide-spread that European cartographers were marking it upon their maps. Indeed, one of them, in a chart drawn about 1538, not only showed it, but added the further information that "the French" had sailed through it to China!

It is hardly surprising to find that English sailors and adventurers welcomed this apparent proof of the existence of a route which would enable them to challenge the Spanish monopoly over the trade of the Orient. As early as 1530 two such adventurers, Robert Thorne and Roger Barlow, drafted a "Declaration of the Indies" and presented it to Henry VIII. In it they petitioned for royal support for a voyage "north over the Pole" and then southwestward through the Strait of Anian to the tropics, where in "the richest islands and kingdoms" might be obtained those commodities "that we here esteem most." Unfortunately for Thorne and Barlow, the commodity which Henry "esteemed most" in 1530 was his legal separation from Catharine of Aragon; his eyes, when he could tear them from Anne Boleyn, were turned east to Rome rather than west to a new world. The royal support was not

forthcoming. As the years passed, however, interest in English ventures to the west quickened. The twin attractions—the possibility of a fight with the hated Spaniard, and the chance of a quick fortune at his expense—won the attention of more and more of the Elizabethan adventurers.

For the Spanish authorities, of course, the discovery of the strait would be most inconvenient. The inevitable result would be the loss of their trading monopoly in the rich south Pacific area, and the descent upon them of the English freebooters, men who were in Spanish eyes the worst pirates afloat. The very thought was enough to bring shudders to the captains of the great Manila ships which plied across the Pacific. Small wonder, then, that the authorities in New Spain showed little desire to explore their possessions in the north. In fact, they steadfastly refused to permit the use of their harbours, their ships, or even their maps, for such purposes.

Faced with this attitude, those who sought the sea route to the Indies had to confine their efforts to the search for a passage from the north and east. Generations of English sailors dreamed of finding the passage, and many died in the attempt. This was to be the last great discovery, an achievement which Martin Frobisher called "the only thing in the world that was left yet undone, whereby a notable mind might be made famous and fortunate." The Northwest Passage, said Frobisher, was "as plausible as the English Channel," and with Queen Elizabeth's approval he set out to prove that it was just as real. His first voyage, in 1576, took him far enough west to touch Greenland, but that was hardly a discovery. The Queen was obviously disappointed, for when she gave her permission for the second voyage, Frobisher was specifically directed "for the searching more of this gold ore than for the searching any further for the discovery of the passage." There was little doubt about the real reason for Elizabeth's interest! Frobisher's second voyage in 1577 failed to accomplish much more—in fact he brought back to England nothing but a few tons of rock with promising golden flecks in it, and the memory of what must have been a rather humiliating wound. In a

brush with Eskimos on Greenland shore, the natives had turned on the Englishmen, "chased them to their boats, and hurt the general in the buttock with an arrow." To add insult to injury, the "golden flecks" turned out to be but iron pyrites. A third voyage in 1578 produced not even an honourable scar, and Frobisher's backers went into bankruptcy.

Despite this failure, the Northwest Passage was still on the maps, still a valuable prize for an England soon to be at grips with Spain. In 1585 a Northwest Company was chartered in London, and Captain John Davis made during the following years three voyages which took him as far as the western shores of what is now Baffin Island. Ten years after Davis' last voyage a company of Merchant Adventurers was organized to continue the search for the Northwest Passage and in 1602 its first expedition set out. This voyage came to an early end when the sailors mutinied and forced Captain Weymouth to return to England. The mutiny, it should be noted, was headed by, of all people, the ship's chaplain! Another expedition, in 1606, was no more successful. Then, in 1610 Henry Hudson made his famous voyage around the coast of Greenland, and across to the strait and into the bay which both now bear his name. As every school child now knows, he was going to his death. After wintering in the bay the captain planned to continue the voyage, but his crew mutinied and Hudson, his young son, four sick men and three loyal ones, were all loaded into an open boat and set adrift to meet a fate which never has been known.

Hudson's death only spurred the hopes of his former employers in London. As soon as they heard the story of the voyage and its tragic end from the survivors when they reached England, the Company outfitted another expedition under Sir Thomas Button, which retraced Hudson's route into the bay. But neither Button, nor Captain Baffin who followed in 1615, could find a way out of the bay to the west. Nor could Captain John Hawbridge in 1619, nor Jens Munk, a Dane who wintered ashore that year on the spot where the town of Churchill now stands. Sir Thomas Roe, Captain James, and

Luke Foxe, all headed later expeditions into the Bay, but none could find an exit through the seemingly continual fog and endless ice.

So many had sought for so long to find this fabled northern passage to Cathay, that it is hardly surprising that there should appear men who claimed to have found it. For at least two hundred years accounts were circulated — and believed — of allegedly successful voyages. That these accounts were false in no way detracted from their attraction for the public, for it was not until the end of the eighteenth century that even their falsity could be proven.

Certainly the best known of these voyages was that of the Greek Juan de Fuca. His story first appeared in 1625, in a book by Samuel Purchas, entitled *Purchas, His Pilgrimes*, a work "*Contayning a History of the World, in Sea voyages and lande Travells, by Englishmen and others.*" (There were very few others!) Among the various "God's Wonders in Nature and Providence" which were therein related, was the testimony of a reputable English merchant named Michael Lok, in all probability the man who is identified in one of Hakluyt's chapters as the London agent for "the Muscovie Company." According to Purchas, some twenty years earlier this man had penned a "Note made by me, Michael Lok the elder, touching the Strait of Sea, commonly called *Fretum Anian* in the South Sea, through the Northwest Passage of *Meta incognita.*"

Lok's story was that while in Venice in April of 1596 he met "an old man, about three score yeares of age, called commonly Juan de Fuca, but named properly Apostolos Valerianos," who told him a wonderful story. The old man claimed that he had acted as pilot for an expedition sent out by the "Vizeroy of Mexico . . . to discover the Straits of Anian, along the coast of the South-Sea, and to fortifie in that Strait, to resist the passage and proceedings of the English Nation, which were feared to passe through these Straits into the South Sea."

This voyage failed to find the strait. The failure was due, said the story, not to any deficiency on the part of the

pilot, nor even to the magnitude of the task, but simply to the incompetence of the Spanish captain. When a second expedition in 1592 was placed under Juan's own direction it ended naturally, in tremendous success. Between 47° and 48° N, the intrepid Greek found a "broad inlet of sea." He entered it, and sailed eastward for more than twenty days, "touching land in divers places," finding people clad in "Beast's skins," and gathering evidence that the area was "rich of gold, silver, Pearle, and other things." Having now sailed for twenty days, right into the heart of the continent, and having reached a point probably somewhere in northern Saskatchewan, Juan "thought he had now well discharged his office, and done the thing which he was sent to doe." And so the expedition returned to the entrance of the sea, and thence back to Mexico again, with Juan himself "hoping to be rewarded greatly of the Viceroy for the service done in this said Voyage." His hopes were dashed, however. No reward came from the Spaniards, for by this time the Dons had come to realize that "the English Nation had now given over all their voyages for discoverie of the North-west passage . . . and therefore they needed not his service therein any more." The man who should have been lionized was turned away without reward. One result of this shabby treatment at the hands of the Spaniards was that Juan de Fuca was now, according to Lok, prepared to come to England and serve the Queen. He was ready, if her Majesty would but furnish him with a single ship, to take it from one end of the passage to the other, and to do it all in thirty days time! And just incidentally, there was one other slight consideration. Juan claimed that some time before his voyage to the Strait, he had been serving upon a Spanish ship which, while off the coast of California had been captured and sacked by the famous English privateer, Captain Cavendish. As a result of Cavendish's attack the old Greek had lost the sum of "sixty-thousand Duckets of his owne goods," and he now hoped that Queen Elizabeth would "doe him justice for his goods lost."

Lok himself, according to his narrative, was ready to place

the utmost faith in the veracity of the story, and was even ready to bring its hero to London at his own expense, pending action by the Queen's government. But his attempts to communicate with the pilot proved fruitless, and in 1602 Lok heard that he had died. The narrative, which was sent to Richard Hakluyt and which now appeared in Purchas' additions to Hakluyt's "Voyages," served to win for Juan de Fuca, if there ever was such a person, a posthumous fame. Indeed for two hundred years the legend of his discovery was perpetuated in all maps. Small wonder that modern explorers could do little else than give his name to the strait through which they finally gained entrance to the Gulf of Georgia and the waters of Puget Sound.

An even more imposing claim was offered by a Portuguese navigator who in 1609 committed to manuscript "A Relation of the discovery of the Strait of Anian, made by me, Captain Lorenzo Ferrer de Maldonado, in 1588, in which is described the course of the navigation, the situation of the place, and the manner of fortifying it." Maldonado's story was even more sensational than that told by Lok, but it was not published until 1788, so that its effect belongs to a later period. Unlike Juan de Fuca, who had sailed from west to east into the continent, Maldonado claimed that he had entered the passage from the east and travelled west. Sailing from Lisbon he went through the Labrador Straits and Davis Strait, thence to the eastern end of the Strait of Anian (presumably Hudson Bay) and westward from that place to the Pacific. In a harbour at the eastern entrance to the South Sea, Maldonado's expedition, he claimed, encountered a large vessel manned by Hanseatics and loaded with a cargo of "brocades, silks, porcelain, feathers, precious stones and gold." All had been obtained apparently in what is now our North West Territory!

Almost as amazing as this voyage across North America was the story told by the self-styled "Admiral," Bartholomew de Fonte. According to this rather engaging rascal, he had commanded an expedition which set sail from Lima in April of 1640. At a point on the Pacific coast of America somewhere

between 50° and 55° N., the doughty admiral found an opening to the east which led him eventually to the Atlantic. The story of this wonderful voyage across the mountains and prairies was not printed until 1708; at that time it provoked little but curiosity, but geographers accepted it as confirmation of the existence of a passage which for centuries they had been showing on their charts.

Spanish expeditions, using Mexican or Californian ports as bases of operations might very easily have exposed the wild falseness of the claims which had thus been advanced. But Spanish authorities were wary about sending out such expeditions. There seemed little reason to doubt the fact that the passage really did exist, and its exploration and its use by English seamen would be productive of nothing but danger and nuisance for the Spaniards. Thus, and in spite of claims which were later advanced, the actual truth is that from 1608 until 1767 no attempt was made to carry out any accurate survey of the coast north of the peninsula of California. Indeed, so little was done that as late as 1767, Spanish maps still showed California not as a peninsula, but rather as a cluster of islands named "Las Islas Carolinas."

It was activity from another direction which finally forced the lethargic officials in Spain and Mexico into renewed action. In December of 1724 the eccentric Peter the Great, Czar of Russia, signed letters of instruction to a Danish naval officer in his employ, setting out the plan for a voyage of exploration along the Siberian coast. Inspired by the same curiosity and restless zeal for innovation which had characterized his policy elsewhere, Peter ordered his lieutenant, Vitus Bering, to outfit ships at Kamchatka for a voyage north along the Asian coast. The purpose of the expedition was to find if the Asian and American continents were actually joined, or were separated by a sea passage. If such passage existed, Bering's orders were to chart it, and to cross to the American side for observations and survey as well.

Five weeks after issuing these orders Peter himself was dead, but the plan which he had conceived was carried through.

In January of 1725 an expedition set out by land from St. Petersburg. The twenty-six men in the party faced a journey to the Kamchatka peninsula of over five thousand miles, most of it through the wildest and most inhospitable region in the world. They had to scale mountains, cross barren tundra and great stretches of swamp and muskeg, and pierce almost impenetrable forests, all while laden down not only by the necessary provisions and equipment for such a task, but in addition by the tools and machinery for building a ship when their destination was reached. Here was one of the greatest of the epic journeys which men have made in the long process of conquering the continents.

By the middle of the following summer Bering and his men had reached Yakutsk on the Lena River in Siberia. Seven hundred miles of wilderness still separated them from Okhotsk, the tiny settlement on the mainland coast which had been selected as the base of operations. Half way to their goal, winter overtook the expedition and ice closed in on boats which they were using. As a result the men had to harness themselves to sleds and pull their equipment the more than three hundred remaining miles. Bering himself had proceeded the main body with a mounted convoy; it was the frozen carcasses of the advance party's abandoned horses which provided the food without which the expedition would never have reached its objective.

At Okhotsk a base was now established. By March of 1728 a secondary base on the Kamchatka itself was ready, and a ship, the *Gabriel*, was built and in the water. Considering the lack of everything but timber, this must have been in itself a miracle of ingenuity and dogged labour. By July the *Gabriel* was as ready as possible for the task which lay ahead of her, and on the thirteenth of that month she set sail for the north. At the end of September she was back at her base, having reached the waters off the East Cape, and having entered the strait which now bears the name of her master. Bering himself was convinced that Asia and America were divided by a strait of water, even although prevailing fogs

had prevented him from sighting the American coast. Another year of exploration from Kamchatka still failed to provide proof of his conviction, so he decided to return to St. Petersburg without it. Already he had accomplished in his own painstaking way a task important enough, surely, to make his name immortal.

At court, however, and among his colleagues, Bering was made to feel that he had failed. He himself was convinced that the continents were separated, but he had nothing more than native tales to support his conviction, for he had turned back at the critical moment before rounding the East Cape to sail westward around the horn of Siberia. Bering was not the man to continue long in such an invidious position. Supported by influential friends at court, he now proposed a second and more ambitious undertaking. Fortunately for him the Czarina Anna looked with favour upon his plan, and gave him her consent and approval. Scientists of all descriptions, engineers, surveyors, even a pair of landscape painters, were detailed to form part of the huge force of over six hundred men which made up his new command. The goal was three-fold; to delineate the straits, to explore and map a route to Japan, and to chart the Arctic coast of Siberia.

The organization of the whole scheme was directed entirely by Bering himself, and he paid a heavy price for the energy with which he discharged his duty. Seven years passed in preparation for the task; not until June of 1741 was everything in readiness at the new port of Petropavlosk. By this time, Bering himself was a dying man, but he refused to surrender his command of the work now to be done. On the fourth of June the two ships set sail, the *St. Peter*, under Bering; and the *St. Paul*, under Captain Alexei Chirikoff. Almost immediately they were separated by storm and fog and thereafter each pursued a separate course. Bering himself made a landfall on the American coast and spent some weeks in exploration of the mainland and of the Aleutian group of islands. By the end of the short summer a great deal of valuable work had been accomplished, but the captain and a third of the crew

were so ill from scurvy that they could not attend to their duties. Limping home towards Kamchatka, the *St. Peter* encountered the islands now known as the Commander Islands. Against the wishes of the dying leader, those officers and men still able to work the ship took it into a harbour there and made preparations to wait out the winter. The few still with strength enough to wield tools, dug a pit and roofed it with driftwood to provide shelter for the sick and dying who were then carried ashore. For most of them the struggle was simply to hold off death for as long as possible. Hunger, cold, and a particularly violent form of scurvy carried them off one by one and their bodies were thrown out of the shelter to become food for the hordes of wild foxes which invaded the camp and even attacked the living. In December Bering himself died and was buried in the pit in which he had lain. When spring came at last the survivors were too few and too weak to refloat their grounded ship; their only alternative was to salvage enough timber from it to build a small forty foot boat and in that little vessel they were finally able to reach their home base.

In the meantime the *St. Paul*, under Chirikoff, had pursued its own course. By the middle of July she had made a landfall on the American coast, and was slowly coasting southward. In the neighbourhood of Sitka Sound, two boats were sent ashore in search of fresh water. Neither boats nor crews were ever seen again—victims in all likelihood of those same Indian tribes which were later to display such hostility to both Russian and English-speaking traders. In the face of this disaster, Chirikoff turned westward again and finally made a safe return by December to the harbour of Petropavlosk. Twenty-one of his seventy-six men were dead of scurvy or of privation when the *St. Paul* reached her home port.

The achievements of Bering and Chirikoff hardly seemed heroic at the moment. Though both had sighted the American coast, neither had landed upon it, and little in the way of mapping or charting had been done. One significant result was apparent, however. The survivors of both crews brought

back not only word of the riches in furs awaiting the adventurer, but tangible evidence in the form of pelts as well. Particularly impressive was the fur of the sea-otter, an animal hitherto unknown in the fur-markets of Europe. So rich was this fur, and so eager the buyers for it, that in the years following scores of expeditions were outfitted for the coast of what is now Alaska. The supplies of sea-otter were rapidly depleted by indiscriminate slaughter, but fur-seals still continued to be found in large numbers, and their pelts supplied sufficient incentive for large scale Russian activity on the coast.

By the end of the century one single powerful organization, the Russian-American company, had an iron grip on the trade. It was an organization much like the great English chartered companies, for it operated on a grant from the Czar covering all the coast of America north of latitude 55° N. With posts extending down the coast to its headquarters at Sitka on Baranof Island, the company carried on a trade both highly profitable to its shareholders and completely savage and ruthless to the native populations.

It was this Russian activity, pressing ever southward as the otter and seal herds were depleted, which at long last spurred into action the lethargic Spaniards far to the south in Mexico. If Spain's claim to the coast was to be maintained against a possible Russian challenge, it must be strengthened by at least a perfunctory attempt to map and chart the limits of her domains. There was another new factor in the case. The final establishment of British supremacy along the eastern seaboard of North America in 1763, must have suggested to the Spanish officials in Mexico, the rather obvious possibility of British exploration overland across the continent and of British territorial claims in the wake of such exploration.

For various reasons, then, official Spanish attention was now directed to the exploration of the northern Pacific region. Once again a search was to be pressed for the strait, or bay, or river, which might give access from the west to the great interior of the continent. In 1774 a new Marine Department was set up at San Blas to facilitate such explorations and in

June of that year the first expedition under its auspices set out. Don Juan Perez, in command of the tiny corvette *Santiago*, sailed from Monterey harbour with instructions to examine the coast as far as latitude 65° N. The little vessel had to bear well out to sea, and its first landfall was the western shore of the islands now known as the Queen Charlottes. No landing was attempted, but Indians in their canoes came within wary distance of the Spanish vessel. Casting south for a suitable landing place, the *Santiago* was again driven out to sea by winds and by the dangers of a fog-shrouded coast. On August 18 she clawed once more back to land, this time probably in the vicinity of present-day Point Estevan, and plans were made to put ashore the following day. But when morning came fog again concealed the shoreline, and a sudden squall made it necessary for the *Santiago* to cut its anchor cable and run for deep water. Supplies of both water and food were dangerously low and scurvy had broken out among the men, so that without further attempt to effect a landing, Perez ordered an immediate return to Monterey.

The prevalence of scurvy in the crews of the Spanish ships is one more piece of evidence of negligence on the part of the naval authorities. Long before this time both the causes and the right preventives for scurvy had been known and demonstrated. Elizabethan doctors had written about the disease, while during the seventeenth century a number of published works such as Woodall's *The Surgeon's Mate*, published in 1617, and Cockburn's *Sea Disease* in 1696, had outlined the causes of scurvy and recommended the use of both fresh vegetables and bottled citrus fruit juice as preventives. During the 1740's a Royal Navy physician, James Lind, carried on experiments at sea among naval personnel which proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that scurvy could be rather easily prevented—and cured—by including in the diet of crews the proper anti-scorbutic foods. His work, *A Treatise on Scurvy*, was published in 1753 and received a great deal of public attention abroad as well as in England.

With characteristic caution, the Admiralty in London did

not act on the matter for some years. In fact, it was not until 1795 that orders were finally issued requiring the proper provisioning of Royal Navy vessels for long voyages. Of course, individual commanders—Captain Cook is the notable example—saw to it personally that their ships were adequately stocked with anti-scurvy, foodstuffs. Such precautions were commonplace with both British and Dutch ships, but apparently nothing was done to protect the crews of these early Spanish expeditions.

The year following Perez' failure, a much more ambitious expedition was outfitted. In the spring of 1775, two ships were commissioned, the *Santiago* under Don Bruno Hecata, and the tiny *Sonora* under Juan Francisco Bodega y Quadra. According to Quadra himself, the purpose of this expedition was "to advance as far as possible towards the North Pole from California, and to survey the coast" with a view to establishing a formal Spanish claim to the new lands. On July 11, three weeks after leaving California, the officers of the *Santiago* went ashore at about latitude 47° N., well south of the entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and took possession of the region in the name of the King of Spain. A landing party from the *Sonora*, some miles to the north, was attacked by Indians at about the same time and the whole party was butchered. The natives then put out in their canoes and attacked the little vessel. Although the attack was beaten off, six more men were killed by Indian arrows. When the larger *Santiago* arrived on the scene, only three men were left on board the *Sonora* still able to aid in handling the ship.

Faced with this set-back, the commander of the larger vessel suggested immediate return to California. The other officers, however, after much debate, finally talked some courage into their commander, and the expedition once again set sail to the north. Three days later the two little ships were separated by storms and Hecata seized this second opportunity to abandon the voyage and to turn southward again. On his way he sighted the mouth of a large river, probably that which was later to be called the Columbia.

In the meantime Quadra and his crew of fifteen men, in their little twenty-seven foot *Sonora*, beat far to the north in a heroic but very foolhardy attempt to obey their instruction to reach the sixty-fifth parallel. Either weather conditions were, to put it mildly, unusual, or the Spaniards exaggerated their difficulties, for the log of the *Sonora* reported that the shrouds were ice-coated most of the time. This in July, and in the waters of Canada's "evergreen playground!" This severe weather, coupled with the inevitable outbreak of scurvy, finally forced Quadra to turn back. He had reached a point further north than any of his countrymen, however, having sailed at least as far north as Sitka Sound, in the neighbourhood of 57° N. More important still was the fact that on the return voyage a landing was made on what is now called Prince of Wales Island, and the formal ceremony was performed of taking possession of the coast in the name of the King of Spain. By the middle of November the tattered *Sonora* and its scurvy-ridden crew were back in Mexico again.

The following spring the authorities at San Blas made still another attempt to explore and map their northern territories. In February of 1776 the *Favorita*, under the command of Ignacio Arteaga, with Quadra as his lieutenant, sailed for the north from San Blas. After touching at "Port Bucareli," Quadra's anchorage of the year before, the *Favorita* continued to the north, into waters which Chirikoff had charted thirty-eight years before, and then turned back towards California.

So far the Spanish voyages had been singularly barren of results. The ships sent were far too small, with too few men to organize landing parties, with provisions which were both scanty and ill-chosen, and with navigation instruments and mapping techniques which were completely inadequate for the gigantic task to be performed. As a consequence, little information of any value was added by the Spanish voyages. The long coastline which Perez, Hecata, Quadra, and Arteaga had seen, is in reality the shoreline of many islands, but that fact was not known to the Spaniards, nor noted on their charts. In Europe at this time there was a lively curiosity about the

new land, but the Spanish voyages did little to satisfy that curiosity. For all practical purposes the Pacific shore was still an uncharted shore. In Canada the Quebec Act had given a permanence to British occupation, in the Thirteen Colonies the war to establish the United States of America had already begun. But still no white men had yet set foot on the mainland of what is now British Columbia.

In fact, the Spanish authorities were still reluctant either to explore themselves, or to facilitate the exploration of others, and this reluctance only increased when war broke out again in 1779 between Britain and Spain. When that war ended and the Marine Department at San Blas was once more ready to resume its exploration of the north Pacific coast, the work had already been efficiently carried on by others. The voyage of Captain James Cook in 1778 led to the exploration of the coast by the scores of British and American traders who followed his route to the new and highly profitable fur trade on the coast—a trade which the Russian-American Company was already exploiting thoroughly in the coastal regions north of latitude 55° N. With the coming of Captain Cook to the coast a new chapter opened in the history of the northwest. Henceforth it was to be English speaking navigators who would carry on the work of mapping its coast, English speaking nations which would squabble for sovereignty over it, and English speaking adventurers who would explore the great rivers which are its arteries.

### T H R E E

#### *The Last Unknown Sea*

IT WAS THE FEAR of being beaten to the draw by their rivals which prodded the Spanish authorities into action in the Pacific northwest during the seventies. That fear, quite obviously, was justified. Russian traders employed by the great fur company, and Russian navigators in the service of the Czar's government, had already begun the long task of exploring and charting the thousands of islands and fiords which fringe the northern coastline. And even more dangerous than this, in Spanish eyes at least, was the new interest being shown by the authorities in Britain in the old question of whether or not a northern sea passage actually did exist between the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans. This interest was naturally sharpened by the formal acquisition of Canada in 1763, for with the French out of the road there was nothing but space between the English and the Pacific Ocean. Thus in 1775 the British Admiralty decided to dispatch an expedition to north Pacific waters, there to search for rivers or inlets which might provide a passage from west to east through to Hudson's or Baffin Bay. And to show how much importance they attached to the finding of such a sea passage, Admiralty officials now renewed an old offer of a reward of £20,000 for the discovery of the "northwest passage."

Another evidence of the importance of the project was the choice of Captain James Cook as its commander. Only recently returned from his second voyage of exploration to Antarctic waters, Cook's name was on everyone's lips, and the reports of his exploits were popular reading in every circle. The

ubiquitous James Boswell, for example, had talked with Cook, and even "felt a strong inclination to go with him on his next voyage," so that Doctor Johnson had to restrain his disciple's enthusiasm by reminding him "how little was left now for any man to discover, even on such a voyage!"

Captain Cook's preparations were watched with wide interest. To carry out his new instructions the great navigator was given two ships, the *Resolution* and the *Discovery*, with picked crews, the best of equipment, and a number of technical advisers to assist in charting the new land, observing its flora and fauna, and estimating its possible value. With Cook on the *Resolution* went John Gore, a veteran of the earlier voyages, and as sailing master one William Bligh, later to be immortalized by Hollywood and Mr. Charles Laughton as the captain of the *Bounty*. In command of the *Discovery* was Charles Clerke, and his lieutenant was James Burney, later to be the first historian of Pacific exploration. One of the midshipmen was young George Vancouver, a man whose later activities left their mark, too, in British Columbia's history.

The *Resolution* set sail from Plymouth on July 12, 1776, but the *Discovery* had to wait until August 1, for its captain was ill and in jail! Both ships stopped at Table Bay at the Cape of Good Hope, and left there in company in November. By the following spring they were anchored at Queen Charlotte Sound in what is now New Zealand. The summer and fall were spent in exploring and mapping the Friendly Islands and the Society Islands, and in January of 1778 the two ships finally turned their bows to the north to carry out the real purpose of the voyage.

On their way the expedition stopped at the islands which their inhabitants called Owyhee, but which Cook named after his Admiralty boss, the Earl of Sandwich. This was the first time European eyes had sighted them, and if Cook had known the horrors which were to be committed by song-writers and crooners of a later day, he might well have steered resolutely away. Instead, however, the ship's company passed some very pleasant weeks ashore. By early March the ships were within

sight of the coast of New Albion, as Cook named it, at about latitude  $44^{\circ} 33' N.$ , or just off the Oregon coast. Coasting slowly to the north they tried to keep land in sight so that a possible strait would not be overlooked. Fog and severe storms made this impossible for most of the time, but Cook saw enough to convince him that the fabled Strait of Anian did not lie anywhere in these latitudes. In fact, he concluded, "there was not the least probability that ever any such thing existed." His verdict on the matter was the correct one, but his evidence was hardly complete or convincing, since he had failed to note the entrance to the great inland sea which lies between Vancouver Island and the mainland. At that point bad weather kept the British ships well out to sea. The charts which Cook had with him showed the strait, and named it after Juan de Fuca, but so many mistakes had already been found in those charts that in Cook's eyes its presence on the map was almost proof that it was not really there.

On March 29 the two ships made land again, this time north of latitude  $49^{\circ} N.$ , and near the entrance of what is now Nootka Sound. The Indian inhabitants of the area were much impressed by their first view of the ships, and according to their own folk-tale, hotly debated whether these strange things were floating islands, or some sort of super-salmon. The first to pluck up sufficient courage to satisfy her natural curiosity was, of course, a woman—a female witch doctor called Hahatsaik. She paddled out to the ships calling, "Hello, you spring salmon! Hello, you dog salmon! Hello, you coho salmon!" Apparently the reply was reassuring enough, for soon the chiefs and the neighbourhood were out to visit. To one of them, Chief Nanaimis, Cook presented a blanket, to the other, the famous Maquinna, his gold-braided hat, and from each of them he received several furs, both beaver and sea-otter. Thus characteristically began the relations between native and white on this coast!

For four weeks the *Resolution* and the *Discovery* remained in the Sound. Much of the time was spent in repairing the rigging of the ships, but the technical experts on board devoted

considerable time to the exploration of the inlet, and to sketching its topography, its plant life, and its native inhabitants, who were soon on friendly terms with the officers and crews. At the end of April still unaware that his anchorage was on an island shore, and not on the mainland itself, the commander decided to resume his voyage to the north. By May 5 the expedition was in latitude  $58^{\circ} 53' N.$ , having passed through the waters in which earlier maps had placed "the pretended strait to the east." It is worth noting, however, that the expedition had completely failed to note the existence of half a dozen large inlets, and the sight of any one of them would have required close survey by an expedition specifically instructed to "search for, and explore, rivers or inlets that might communicate with Hudson Bay or Baffin Bay."

Once again Cook's conclusion that the strait did not exist was the correct one, even though his reasons were perhaps not well founded. From an anchorage near Prince William Sound, boat parties made careful examination of the coastline in that region, and once again the explorers came in contact with the natives. Crew members were much impressed by the furs which were offered to them in trade for their knives and other metal small-wares, and many of them seized the opportunity to acquire some of the pelts. Perhaps some of them were disappointed at the trades which they made, for quite obviously they were not the first white men whom the Indians had dealt with. In fact, the natives already possessed quantities of European goods, and some skill in barter—both acquired from the agents of the Russian fur company.

From Prince William Sound the expedition now turned southward again, this time spending considerable time in exploring and charting the inlets and islands which form the coastline. Nothing that he found, however, served to shake Cook's firm conviction that if there was a sea passage to the east, it must lie north of  $72^{\circ} N.$  In January of 1779 the *Resolution* and *Discovery* were back at their winter quarters on the island of Owyhee. There Cook himself lost his life in a clash with the natives of that place over the theft of one of the

*Discovery's* boats. However, under Captain Clerke, the second-in-command, the two ships sailed in March back to the north again. This time they sailed northwest to the Asiatic coast, then eastward into Bering Strait and across to the American side. Continued exploration of the coastline in the far north served only to substantiate the conclusion that the long-accepted Strait of Anian had only existed in the imagination of ancient romancers. At long last the expedition turned west for home, and in October of 1780 arrived once more in English waters.

The *Resolution* and the *Discovery* had completed a voyage of over four years duration. During that time both commanders lost their lives, for on the return journey Captain Clerke died of tuberculosis. One of the obviously significant facts about the voyage was that only two members of the crews of both ships died of illness during the long voyage. The other death was that of William Anderson, surgeon of the *Resolution*, and he too, died of tuberculosis. Not one death occurred from the dreaded scurvy which formerly had decimated crews on long voyages. The contrast between the medical record of Cook's ships and that of such expeditions as that of Commander Anson thirty years before, was a startling one, for of Anson's personnel of 926 men, 626 died of disease, particularly scurvy, during the four years of the voyage around the world.

Cook's preparations for his voyage had included the shipping aboard of large quantities of sauerkraut, of fresh onions, fresh citrus fruits and bottled fruit juices, and of his own favourite anti-scorbutic, a "wort" of malt prepared by boiling one part of malt in three parts of water. Perhaps the true measure of James Cook's greatness as a leader was not that he insisted on shipping these foods, but rather that he was successful in getting his men to take them! Sauerkraut, for example, was not a popular food in the navy. But Cook in private ordered his officers to eat their portions in the "cabin mess," and in public offered to make the sauerkraut available for other ranks, too, provided that no man could have more than one pound twice a week. The effect of these tactics was the

almost unanimous use of "sourkrout" at table. So effective were these specifics that the crews on Cook's expeditions were kept practically free of sickness due to dietary deficiency. This fact is the reason for Oliver Wendell Holmes' often quoted, and highly misleading comment on the work of Cook, that a sailor had taught the medical profession how to prevent scurvy.

Lest the reader assume from all this that life for the sailor aboard the *Resolution* or the *Discovery* was one long gastronomical treat, let me hasten to add a comment on the food by one who had to eat it. Dr. Sparman, Cook's surgeon during the second voyage to New Zealand and Australia, tells us that when the ships reached Batavia on the way home "our bread was, and had been for a long time, both musty and mouldy, and at the same time swarming with two different sorts of little brown grubs . . . which either in that state or in that of their larvas, or maggots, had nestled themselves into every bit of bread that we had, so that we could not possibly avoid eating them; and they frequently discovered themselves to us, the former by a bitter, the latter by a disagreeable, cold taste in the mouth. Their maggots were found in such quantities in the pease-soup . . . that we could not avoid swallowing some of them in every spoonful we took." Ugh! By this time the salt-beef had taken on such a consistency that the men carved tobacco-boxes from it. And very attractive they must have been, too, since the beef took on a lovely, high mahogany-like polish when vigorously buffed after carving! !

Cook and his men had accomplished a remarkable work. They had not discovered the sought-for strait, but they had accomplished something which was almost as important, for they had apparently proven that it did not exist. A wealth of information about the coastline, its bays and channels, its inhabitants and its vegetation, was now made available. What was even more important was the fact that the expedition drew to the attention of would-be traders and adventurers the existence of herds of sea-otter and fur-seal in waters off a coast to which Britain now had a legitimate claim, and which could be reasonably safely navigated by utilizing the charts

and maps now made available. In China, in America, and in France, as well as in Britain, there was an eager market for the reports of the voyage when they were published in 1784. Apparently the last unexplored region of the habitable globe was now about to become a new hunting ground for those adventurous souls ready to risk their capital in a dangerous but profitable trade.

Of these latter there was no lack in England. The crews of the *Resolution* and the *Discovery* were themselves anxious to return to the coast—so anxious, in fact, that while in the port of Maçao on the return voyage, some of them had been “not far short of mutiny,” according to one of the officers. The reason for their excitement was plain. In trade with the Indians many of the sailors had acquired furs which they now found the Chinese merchants of Maçao most anxious to buy. The jackets and bed-clothes which the seamen had made for themselves brought handsome sums, some whole skins fetching as much as \$120 for their lucky owners. All in all, probably some \$10,000 was realized by the crew in this unexpected stroke of fortune. Small wonder that many of them wanted to return for more.

Expeditions to tap this new source of wealth were for the moment not permitted. Britain was still at war with her former colonies in North America, and with France and Spain as well, and this consideration compelled the Admiralty to place a temporary embargo upon private voyages to the new coast. But the signing of the peace in 1783, and the publication of the official reports of Cook's voyage in the succeeding year removed all barriers. Within a few years the northwest coast of America was visited by scores of British, American and other expeditions, and the numerous inlets and bays in the long stretch of coast between the mouth of the Columbia and Cross Strait in Alaska, soon became familiar anchorages to the traders who frequented the area.

The first expedition was that of Captain James Hanna, who brought his brig into Nootka Sound in 1785. After an initial brush with the natives of the sound, in which two of

his men were killed, Hanna was able to trade in peace for furs. In December he was back in China where his cargo of more than 500 sea-otter skins had fetched the most satisfactory price of \$20,000. He was back again the following summer, but found that he was no longer alone in the field, for two other vessels had preceded him into Nootka, the *Captain Cook* under Captain Lowrie, and the *Experiment*, commanded by Captain Guise. There is one interesting sidelight to the story of this latter enterprise. The surgeon of the expedition, one John McKay, expressed a desire to remain over the following winter at Nootka "to learn the language and to ingratiate himself with the natives." McKay, the first white man to take up residence in what is now British Columbia, showed remarkable zeal in following his purpose. In fact, next spring he refused the offers of other expeditions to take him off again, and asserted that he was "perfectly content" to remain with the Indians. Not only did he learn their language, but many of their habits as well, for by the fall he had become, according to one visiting trader, "equally slovenly and dirty with the filthiest of them all."

Most of the traders were more anxious to keep their distance from their Indian customers. In fact, most of them insisted that all transactions take place on deck, and only during daylight hours. This was at all times the policy of Captain William Barkley, for example, who brought his *Imperial Eagle* to Nootka in June of 1787. Himself only twenty-five, Barkley had brought with him a bride of seventeen on a honeymoon which must have been even more than ordinarily interesting. It was the *Imperial Eagle* which first entered the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and it was Barkley who showed and named the strait on his charts. Perhaps it is typical of the methods of these traders that when Barkley returned to China to dispose of his furs he was forced to leave his charts and journals with his merchant backers there, as a guarantee that they would not be published or used by other competitors. Through some means, however, Barkley's charts of the coast fell into the hands of the man who was to become the most famous, or

the most infamous, of the sea-going fur traders, Captain John Meares.

Meares arrived on the coast in 1786. His venture was an ambitious one, with two ships outfitted in India and in China, with a crew partly composed of Chinese, the whole sailing under the Portuguese flag to avoid the payment of licence fees to either the South Seas or the East India Company. The smaller of Meares' vessels was lost with all hands somewhere on the coast during the summer, and Meares decided to attempt to winter on the trading grounds aboard the larger vessel, the *Nootka*. An anchorage in Prince William Sound was selected for the experiment. By spring the ship's company was in sore straits. Provisions were gone, the surgeon and twenty-two other members of the crew dead, and the rest weak from the combined attacks of scurvy and the bitter cold which had caused "frost an inch deep below decks." Apparently the only commodity which did not run short was rum, for when help arrived in the spring the survivors seemed to be suffering as much from over-indulgence as from scurvy.

The rescue party was that of Captains Portlock and Dixon of the *King George* and the *Queen Charlotte*. This venture was probably the most ambitious and certainly the best equipped of them all. Both commanders were men who had served under Captain Cook himself and were thus familiar with the coast. More important still, they had ample backing from the King George's Sound Company, among whose shareholders were great peers and cabinet ministers. The primary object of the expedition was, of course, to get furs, but the Company's directors also were anxious that their captains should compile authoritative scientific information about these new and exciting regions. As a result, Portlock and Dixon between them contributed a great deal to the task of exploring and charting the intricate passages among the innumerable islands which actually form the coastline between parallels 52° and 57° N. What was more important, the publication in 1789 of the journals of both Portlock and Dixon, complete with the charts of their voyages, served to make the navigation of

an extremely tricky coastline a good deal less hazardous for those who were to follow.

It was hardly surprising that the Spanish authorities in Mexico now decided to do something about this allegedly illegal activity on a coast claimed by their king. Their displeasure was directed not alone at British traders, for two American vessels, the *Washington* and the *Columbia*, had arrived at Nootka Sound in 1788 to participate in the trade, and the commander of the former, Captain Gray, claimed that he had the official support of the government of the new United States. What was most disturbing to the Spanish officials was the fact that there were now rumours that permanent posts were being established on the coast. One story which reached Mexico was that the Russian-American Company was planning to build a station at Nootka. And no sooner had the authorities in Mexico taken steps to deal with this invasion of their jurisdiction, when news came of an even more immediate threat. In May of 1788 Captain John Meares, apparently undismayed by his first experience in these waters, returned to the coast with two vessels, the *Iphigenia* and the *Felice*, and with the avowed intention of establishing at Nootka Sound a permanent base for his operations. According to Meares' own account (and it is an account which has to be taken with much more than the proverbial grain of salt), the land on which the post was to be built had already been purchased from the Nootka Indians, from the same Chief Maquinna who had greeted Captain Cook's arrival.

On board Meares' ships, which still flew the Portuguese flag, were some seventy Chinese shipwrights and labourers. Said their employer, "They live on fish and rice, and requiring but low wages, it is a matter of economical consideration to employ them." Many later employers on this coast were to advance the same argument without probably knowing of the precedent before them. On the land which he had "bought," Meares set on foot the construction of a "house for his occasional residence, as well as for the more convenient pursuit of his trade with the natives." At the same time other workers

were busy erecting a rude system of breastworks around the post. Most important of the undertakings, however, was the construction of a vessel of some forty tons, to be used in coastwise trade, and to this task the Chinese shipwrights were set immediately. By September the little craft was finished and christened the *North West America*. She took to the water with appropriately boisterous ceremonies attended not only by Meares' men and the natives but by the American crew of the *Washington* as well. We may be sure that the launching of this, the first ship to be built in the Pacific northwest, was well celebrated.

In the fall Meares returned to China, leaving the command to his lieutenant, William Douglas. In the meantime, the Spanish authorities, still unaware of the new intrusion into what they claimed to be Spanish territory, were making plans to send an expedition north for the joint purpose of reaffirming their claim to the coast and of strengthening that claim by building a permanent Spanish settlement on it. The Spanish ships sailed from San Blas in February of 1789. Don Estevan Martinez, a veteran in the Pacific service, a man who had sailed as pilot with Juan Berez in 1774, commanded the party from his ship the *Princessa*, with a smaller vessel, the *San Carlos* under Gonzales Lopez de Haro.

On arrival at Nootka in May, Martinez found in the Sound not only Douglas with the *Iphigenia* but Captain Kendrick and his American vessel, the *Columbia*, as well. Acting with considerable dispatch, if not with diplomacy, Martinez seized the *Iphigenia* and released her in Douglas' command only on condition that she sail for Maçao under bond as a lawful prize. When the *North West America* appeared in the Sound in June, she too was seized, a Spanish crew placed aboard her and she was sent off to Mexico as a prize. In the meantime the Spaniards proceeded to establish a rude sort of settlement on shore, and on June 24, with appropriate ceremonies, took formal possession not only of the sound but of "the adjoining districts, seas, rivers, ports, bays, gulfs, archipelagoes," as well.

On June 15 the *Princess Royal*, another vessel which had

been purchased by Meares and his associates, arrived at the coast and entered the harbour. This ship the Spanish simply ordered to leave after allowing her crew to replenish her supplies of fresh water. Two weeks later the fourth of Meares' vessels, the *Argonaut*, arrived in port, carrying on board tools, materials and another contingent of Chinese workers to implement the original plan of a permanent post at Nootka. The commander of the *Argonaut* seems to have been less amenable to the orders of Martinez than had been the captain of the *Princess Royal*, for after some negotiations his vessel was seized and despatched south with a prize crew aboard. Similar treatment was accorded the *Princess Royal* when she returned to Nootka on July 13.

The news of such high-handed Spanish actions produced the obvious reaction at home in Britain. Until this moment Captain Meares had not made much of the "British" nature of his company, but now that its property was in danger, the "rights of Englishmen" were invoked again. In a memorial to his government, dated April 30, 1790, Meares gave his version of the whole affair, "in full confidence that the proper and necessary measures will be taken to obtain that redress, which he and his associates have, as British subjects, a right to expect." The rather embarrassing circumstance of the Portuguese registry of his ships was simply ignored as irrelevant. The result of the memorial was a "request for information" directed to the Spanish ambassador in London. In reply, that dignitary not only gave a somewhat different version of the incident, but concluded by a request—it was worded almost as a demand—that "the parties who planned these expeditions should be punished, in order to deter others from making settlements on territories occupied and frequented by the Spaniards for a number of years." In effect, Meares' lies were being answered by Spanish exaggerations.

The reaction of the cabinet to the Spanish statement was a blunt demand for "prompt and suitable reparation for these acts of violence" and a refusal even to discuss the issue until "matters are put in their original state." It was obvious

immediately that Pitt and his cabinet colleagues were not going to back down. In fact, they were apparently not averse to making the issue a cause of war. A royal message to Parliament on May 6 summarized the dispute, refuted the Spanish claim to "exclusive rights of sovereignty . . . in that part of the world," and, drawing attention to the fact that Spain "was preparing for war," called for a special grant in the emergency. The royal message was enthusiastically received and the sum of £1,000,000 immediately voted. Preparation for war by both military and naval authorities were vigorously pressed, and popular feeling in support of such action rose to a tremendous pitch with pamphlets, cartoons, and public addresses, all contriving to whip up enthusiasm for what might very easily have become another "War of Jenkins' Ear."

Fortunately for all concerned, even while fleets were putting to sea, negotiations continued between the two governments. Finally, faced by the obvious fact that they could hope for no support from a France now in the throes of its great revolution, and daunted by the completely adamant attitude of Pitt, the Spanish authorities weakened and in October agreed in the Nootka Sound Convention to make restitution of ships and buildings and to give satisfaction to Meares and his associates for their losses. In effect, the convention implied that Spain had renounced her old claim to sovereignty, or at the least to exclusive sovereignty, over the whole Pacific coast of America. Such renunciation did not, of course, mean that Spain transferred her claim to Britain. What it did mean was that henceforth the coast between the Spanish settlements in California and the Russian establishments in Alaska was to be a region in which no nation as yet possessed any distinctive or exclusive claim. Such a settlement of the dispute was very far from being either definitive, or permanent, and its weaknesses were often apparent in the years to come.

For Captain Meares the story had had a happy ending. As compensation for the seizure of his four vessels, and for the loss of the skins which might have been secured in 1789 and 1790, he and his associates were paid the sum of \$210,000—a

sum far in excess of anything which they could have earned in trade! For the historian of British Columbia the dispute ended no less happily. The provision in the convention for restoration of land and buildings at Nootka stipulated that British and Spanish representatives should meet there for the formal transfer. As the representatives for Britain in this matter the Admiralty now despatched Captain George Vancouver, in command of the *Discovery* and Lieutenant William Brougham in the *Chatham*. Their expedition was to perform two functions—to act for Britain in the formal ceremony at Nootka, and also to carry out a project which the Admiralty had planned for 1790, and then postponed because of the crisis with Spain. Specifically, Vancouver was instructed to examine the coast between latitudes 30° and 60° N., with the purpose of “acquiring accurate information with respect to the nature and extent of any water communication which may tend in any considerable degree to facilitate an intercourse, for the purpose of commerce, between the North-West coast and the countries upon the opposite side of the continent, which are inhabited or occupied by His Majesty’s subjects.”

Obviously Captain Cook’s categorical assertions had failed to kill the legend of the Strait of Anian. John Meares, in his memorial had stated as fact that the American sloop *Washington*, commanded by Captain Robert Gray, had explored much of the strait. And a year before that the English cartographer Dalrymple had published a map of the strait and a pamphlet urging its exploitation in connection with the fur trade, asserting not only that “the Spanish” had located the passage, but that they had sailed through it to Hudson’s Bay in twenty-seven days! It was Vancouver’s job now to discover the truth about these claims.

The *Discovery* and the *Chatham* sailed from England in April of 1791, and after wintering in the Sandwich Islands, arrived off the American coast in April of 1792. Vancouver’s landfall was somewhere in northern California and his expedition then proceeded slowly to the north, keeping within sight

of land as far as this was possible. Sad to relate, the expedition completely missed the mouth of the Columbia River and it remained for Robert Gray, now captain of the *Columbia*, to enter the estuary for the first time several months later. This was the same man who according to Meares' story had explored enough of the Strait of Anian to prove that communication with Hudson's Bay really was possible. And this same Gray the English expedition met now, just off the entrance to Juan de Fuca Strait. Gray was quite ready to give information to Vancouver about his venture into that strait, but was astonished to learn that he was being credited with its thorough exploration. Instead, he said, he had only been some fifty miles into the inland sea.

Armed with this information, Vancouver decided to begin at once the job of exploring and surveying the waters into which Gray had entered. At noon on Sunday, April 29, 1792, the *Discovery* and the *Chatham* entered the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Two days later they were in a beautiful sound which Vancouver named after his second lieutenant, Peter Puget. Turning north again, the expedition slowly and carefully examined the mainland coast all the way from Whidby Island to Point Roberts. Once again, however, the mouth of a great river was missed. Crossing from Point Roberts to Point Grey the expedition's small boats were forced by currents far enough out into the gulf that the delta of the Fraser was noted only as "low, swampy land" lying between the points. After rounding Point Grey they turned into a beautiful inlet which Vancouver named after his friend Sir Harry Burrard and which he now very carefully examined.

While the boats of the *Chatham* were surveying the shore along which lie the bathing beaches of the city of Vancouver today, two Spanish ships arrived on the scene. The *Sutil* and the *Mexicana* had entered the strait three days after Vancouver's ships, and for very much the same purpose. It must have been a source of satisfaction to the English to compare the two expeditions. In size of ships, in the number and professional skills of the personnel, most of all in their equipment,

the Spaniards showed clearly why they had failed so completely to exploit these regions long before this. According to Captain Vancouver himself, the *Sutil* and the *Mexicana* were "the most ill-calculated and unfit vessels that could possibly be imagined for such an expedition." The little fifty foot Spanish ships, each carrying a complement of captain, lieutenant and seventeen men, were rated at about "forty-five tons burthen," and this compared rather badly with the *Discovery's* three hundred and fifty tons! Only in one respect—in the quality of their wines—were the Spanish explorers better off than their British competitors. Even their maps were less reliable than those carried by Vancouver's navigators. One small cause for satisfaction was left to the Spaniards, however; they could inform Vancouver that only the year before a Spanish expedition under Manuel Quimper had been in these very waters. Needless to say, this news caused the British captain "no small degree of mortification."

One other item of news was brought by the Spanish captains Galiano and Valdez. They had themselves left the port of Nootka only a few days before, and thus could inform Vancouver that the Spanish representative in the negotiations regarding the formal restitution at Nootka, was waiting for him there. Since the waters stretching to the north still invited examination and since Valdez had been told by Indians that the inlet to the north also led to the open sea, both parties decided to try to reach Nootka by travelling north. By August 5, 1792, the British ships had rounded the northern end of what was now proven to be a great island; three weeks later they were in Nootka harbour.

The negotiations between Captain Vancouver and Bodega y Quadra, the representative of the King of Spain, were carried on at Nootka in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Vancouver, however, insisted that his instructions were simply to receive the full surrender of the lands surrounding the Sound, while Quadra insisted that the function of the representatives was to determine the extent as well as the nature of the sovereignty

which was to be ceded by Spain. Obviously there could be no compromise between these views, and so the issue had to be referred to the respective governments for negotiation and settlement.

Captain Vancouver and his ships left Nootka on October 13. Lieutenant Brougham, in the *Chatham* was commissioned to examine the mouth of the Columbia which the American Captain Grey had entered during the summer, and then to return to England carrying to the Admiralty a full report on the work done. Vancouver, in the meantime, after spending the winter at the Sandwich Islands, returned to Nootka in March of 1793, and then spent the summer in exploration of the coastal regions as far north as the Portland Canal. It is interesting to note that both the *Discovery* and the *Chatham*, which also returned in May, were in the waters of Dean Channel early in June, surveying harbours very close to the spot reached only a few weeks later by Alexander Mackenzie after his overland journey from the Athabaska.

By October of 1793 Vancouver's ships were at Nootka on their way to winter quarters. The following spring saw them back again, this time to carry on extensive surveys of the northern coast which is now part of Alaska. That fall the expedition finally turned for home, arriving in England late in October of 1795. In their three summers on the Pacific northwest coast Vancouver and his men had completed a staggering task, even though they had failed to sight either the Fraser or the Columbia mouth, and their only significant new discovery had been to prove the insular nature of what was now officially termed the Island of Vancouver and Quadra. Their most important work was of a less spectacular nature. As a result of the painstaking labours of these three years, the north-west coast of America had ceased to be the last-known, and the least-known, region in the world. It was still far-off, but it was now well-charted and hence reasonably easy of access.

Even as the task of exploration was being accomplished,

however, the fur-traders who would most obviously benefit from it were beginning to lose interest. Their methods of operation—in particular their indiscriminate slaughter of both sea-otter and fur seal—were really responsible for their own difficulties. By 1800 furs were becoming very hard to get in coastal waters, either by barter or by killing, and although American firms continued their operations for another twenty or thirty years they were on a smaller and smaller scale. The interest of most traders switched from seal to beaver and the centre of the trade shifted from sea to land. It was the interior of this new country which now seemed to offer the best prospects for quick profits, and the chief problem was to find the easiest way of getting to it. It was abundantly clear that there was no Strait of Anian through which fur-trading expeditions could sail in safety and comfort. Instead the search must be pressed, both from east and west, for landways to open up the new region, and to bring it into contact with the rest of North America.

In the eyes of the historian, by 1792 the era of very recent history had already begun. The Americans had won their independence, and the French Revolution had begun. The great industrial revolution was well under way in Britain, and the form of government in Canada had been determined by the Constitutional Act. But still no white man had crossed the great mountains and come down to the sea, and still no white man had even seen the great river which was to become the artery of a province. In fact, until the Spanish expeditions of 1791, and of Vancouver in 1792, it is doubtful if any white man had even set foot on the mainland of what is now British Columbia. Now came a dour Scots fur trader to change all that.

F O U R

*From Canada By Land*

DURING the same year which saw Spain and Great Britain preparing for war over the Nootka Sound region, a young trader far up in the interior wilderness was getting ready for a voyage of exploration over the mountains which rimmed the prairie vastness, and down into the interior of the Pacific coastal region. Alexander Mackenzie was one of many agents of the famous North West Company now busy in the vast regions stretching from Lake Superior to the Rockies. Their presence in these far western regions was itself an indication of the great changes which had come over the fur trade. For the first century of its operations the Hudson's Bay Company had been able to carry on its trade in a relatively easy manner. Generally its agents simply waited in the company forts on the Bay for the Indians to bring their furs down to tidewater, and only occasionally did an ambitious or adventurous officer such as Henry Kelsey, or James Knight, visit the Indians of the interior. Lately, however, competitors had appeared in the field, who were themselves ready and willing to undertake the journey to the Indian trapping grounds. Obviously, the Hudson's Bay Company had to change its policy.

At first this new competition came from the French. In 1731, for example, the trader La Vérendrye established a post on the Lake of the Woods and from this base carried on a profitable trade with the Indians. Within ten years La Vérendrye, his sons and his associates had established posts on the Red River, on the Assiniboine, and at the northern end of Lake Winnipeg, and their explorations had opened the vast regions of the prairie lands to the fur trader.

Their activities made the Hudson's Bay Company officials more ready to entertain schemes of exploration themselves. In 1754 one of their officers, Anthony Henday, accompanied a band of Indians on their return trip from the Bay, and travelled as far as the banks of the Saskatchewan River. Significantly enough, Henday found that two French traders were established already in a rude post ("more properly a Hogstye," said the Briton) on the banks of the great river. On his return journey he found still another French establishment, the famous Fort La Corne, near the junction of the North and South Saskatchewan Rivers. Sixteen years later another Hudson's Bay Company officer, Samuel Hearne, led a party of exploration north and west, finally reaching the Arctic shore of the continent at the place where the Coppermine River empties into Coronation Gulf.

By 1771 private British traders were moving into the interior from Montreal in considerable numbers. At first their operations were completely unregulated and the competition between them was vicious and bloody. More important, it was also very expensive. As a result, in 1783 most of the important traders and trading companies now active in the region west of the Great Lakes decided to end their strife and agreed to pool their resources into one association to be known as the North West Company. One firm, the XY Company, remained outside the group, and for several years continued to fight the larger association. In 1787, however, the two rivals agreed upon amalgamation and the fur trade in the west entered upon a new and prosperous era.

The policy of the "Nor-Westerns" was most aggressive. They went after furs themselves, and did not wait for trappers or Indians to come to their posts. To facilitate the trade, new forts were built far to the west, some of them in the rocky fastnesses of the great mountains themselves. At one of the new stations, Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabasca, the chief trader was young Alexander Mackenzie. Like so many other Nor-Westerns, Mackenzie thought that he had not one but two jobs to perform. His first duty, of course, was to get furs. A

second, and far more congenial task, was to explore the unknown regions and "add new countries to the realm of British commerce."

As part of this responsibility, Mackenzie in 1789 undertook the first of his two famous voyages, the trip down the great river which bears his name, into the "Frozen Ocean" at its mouth. This exploit alone might have won for him enduring fame, but it was far from satisfying his ambitions. Indeed, he named the stream on which he had travelled, River Disappointment, for he had hoped that it might lead to the Pacific. Even as he returned to Fort Chippewyan he was planning another venture, a trip through the great mountain barrier of the Rockies and down to the shores of the Western Sea. Since his first experience had convinced him that he lacked the "necessary books and instruments," and was "deficient in the sciences of astronomy and navigation," Mackenzie spent a year in London, acquiring the technical skills necessary for determining latitude and longitude and for properly mapping newly travelled routes. Satisfied at last that he had mastered the art of navigation, he returned to Fort Chippewyan to make plans for his great undertaking.

During the fall of 1792 Mackenzie's little party left its base on Lake Athabasca, crossed over to the Peace River and travelled up that stream for some three hundred miles. Then they established winter quarters at a spot near the present town of Peace River. In May of the following year, as soon as the river was sufficiently free of ice to be navigable, Mackenzie and his party set their faces to the west again. In a single birch bark canoe some twenty-five feet in length, eight white men and two Indian guides began a voyage which has become one of the great epics of continental exploration.

For the first ten days conditions were ideal for canoe travel. As they came closer to the mountains, however, the river banks began to draw in and rise higher and higher above them. Even in the foothills the Peace began to give the lie to its name; as the party penetrated into the gorges of the mountains the

river became more and more difficult. On May 20, for example, Mackenzie recorded in his daily journal that "in the distance of two miles we were obliged to unload four times and carry everything but the canoe." At one gorge during that day's travel he noted that "the river is not more than fifty yards wide, and flows between stupendous rocks, from whence huge fragments sometimes tumble down, and falling from such an height, dash into small stones, with sharp points. . . ." At another place the stream ran close around the base of a great rock and the men had to cut steps in it for the distance of twenty feet. Then Mackenzie made the crossing and "at the hazard of my life I leaped down on a small rock below, where I received those who followed me, on my shoulders."

Just above this point, they came to a place where the river bent around a precipitous mountain and through a gorge whose sides afforded no foothold for carrying. Here the current was so strong that it was simply out of the question to attempt to take the canoe through. The French-Canadian voyageurs who made up the boat crew were anxious to give up the struggle and to return, but Mackenzie and his lieutenant, Alexander Mackay, were determined to continue. After a good night's sleep (the men were allowed to rest until the unbelievable hour of eight in the morning!) and a day spent in repairing canoe and equipment, the boatmen were persuaded to tackle the job. A rough trail was cut through the brush and timber straight up the mountain and down the other side, and over this trail arms, provisions and trading goods were carried. Then the canoe itself was laboriously hauled on rollers over the same path. In three days of constant back-breaking toil the expedition advanced about seven miles.

By the end of May they had reached the fork in the Peace River where the Finlay River flows in from the northwest and the Parsnip up from the south. Although his own inclination was to take the northern branch, the Indian guides persuaded Mackenzie to take the other, apparently more difficult road.

Again he had to win over the boatmen, for by this time they had had enough of fighting inch by inch against the current sweeping down against them; once again it was the grim determination of Mackenzie and Mackay to go on alone if necessary which finally won the men over. Soon after their flagging spirits received a boost when they met a party of natives—the first they had encountered since entering the mountains. These Indians had never seen a white man, but they had at least heard of them. They told Mackenzie that the tribes living farther to the west sometimes journeyed to the sea, “the Stinking Lake, where they trade with people like us, that come there in vessels as big as islands.” Needless to say this information, garbled and indefinite as it was, made it easier for Mackenzie to push his men on.

On June 12 the party had reached a small lake which was obviously the headwater of the Parsnip River. Only a short distance away, and over a well-marked Indian trail, another lake drained in the opposite direction towards the southwest. At long last, then, they had reached the height of land. With feelings of tremendous relief the voyageurs could now make with the stream instead of having to fight it for each foot of progress. Very soon, however, they were facing new problems; the westward progress was not much faster and not much easier, and was if anything even more dangerous. The Bad River on which Mackenzie was now embarked, and which he named, was a narrow turbulent stream, broken in many places by impassable rapids, blocked in others by fallen trees, and bordered for much of its length by swampy marshes which made portaging incredibly difficult.

On the evening of June 17 the party reached what the Indians had called the “Great River.” They were the first Europeans to set foot on the banks of the Fraser, and the first to attempt its passage to the sea. For a day the voyage west and south was a pleasant one, as they were borne along a wide river by a current “very strong but perfectly safe.”

Perhaps Mackenzie, who “was in the habit of sometimes

indulging myself with a short doze in the canoe," was sleeping when they passed the mouth of the Nechako. At any rate they missed seeing it. On the next day the river plunged into what is now called Fort George Canyon, and the easy voyage was over. Here the rapids were quite impassable for the canoe, so once again the boatmen had to carry their loads over the rocky portage, then retrace their steps to shoulder the canoe itself. For the next week this job had to be often tackled. There were other exciting moments, too. An Indian lodge was seen on the bank, "the only Indian habitation of this kind that I had seen on this side of Mechilimakina." On another occasion, a volley of arrows almost reached the canoe, and showed that the white man's coming was not being hailed with appropriate rejoicing.

At the worst of the gorges, today's Cottonwood Canyon, the boatmen decided to run the rapids rather than face the labour of portaging. The trip through was made in safety, but the canoe was so badly sprung that soon after it had to be abandoned and a new one built. Some experiences were less frightening. Deer were plentiful, and fish as well, so that rapidly dwindling food supplies were restored. On the banks of the river at one spot Mackenzie found "a great plenty of wild onions, which when mixed with our pemmican, was a great improvement of it; though they produced a physical effect on our appetites which was rather inconvenient to the state of our provisions." He does not mention another physical effect which those same wild onions produced upon later travellers. They also found them "rather inconvenient," particularly if they were trying to travel fast.

By the end of the month Mackenzie had made up his mind to leave the river and to strike west for the coast by some other less difficult route. Information which he had received from Indians along the way, convinced him that he was in reality embarked on the great River of the west. If that were true, he concluded, the river must continue south for many hundreds of miles before turning towards the west and the ocean. For

such a trip it was obvious that this party was very badly equipped. Supplies of both powder and shot were running low, of rice, sugar, flour and salt there was barely enough for another month's travel, and the single canoe was inadequate for the task of running the rapids and rough water which the Indians assured him lay below. Then too, and this was probably the all-important consideration, the ocean lay, not south, but west of his present location. To the west then he determined to go.

When Mackenzie made his decision the expedition had reached a spot somewhere near the site of the present town of Alexandria. Some fifty or sixty miles back upstream, they had noted a comparatively large river flowing in from the west, so back to that point they now returned. On July 3 they left the Fraser to follow the stream which they named appropriately the West Road River. Once again they were fighting the current instead of racing with it. So difficult did this prove that after only one day on the river it was decided to cache the canoe and part of the provisions, and to proceed on foot. Up the course of West Road River, over the Telegraph Range of mountains, and down to the banks of the Bella Coola River, the eight men and their Indian guide struggled against every kind of natural obstacle. In addition to arms and ammunition, each man had to shoulder a ninety pound pack, and even though those packs lightened as they struggled west, it was with tremendous relief that they finally saw the waters of the little stream which was to bear them to the coast.

At a large village on the Bella Coola River the explorers were warmly received, and very well treated. Indeed, says Mackenzie, "soon after I had retired to rest last night, the chief paid me a visit to insist on my going to his bed-companion, and taking my place himself; but not withstanding his repeated entreaties, I resisted this offering of his hospitality." More tangible, and more acceptable, were the gifts of salmon which were pressed upon the visitors. Pleasant as these several days were, the business of the expedition was to reach the coast,

and that goal was apparently not far off. The chief himself informed Mackenzie that "ten winters" before, he himself had made the trip to tidewater, and there had seen white men in two large ships. In all probability, he had seen either Captain Cook or members of his crews. Even more obvious evidence that communication with the coast was relatively easy, was the presence in the village of numerous articles of obviously European or American manufacture, of copper and brass, of blue sailor-cloth with brass buttons, and of flowered cotton goods.

On Saturday, July 20, 1793, the expedition set out once again from "Friendly Village," in new canoes and guided by the young son of the chief. That evening they caught their first glimpse of the sea, and next day their canoes were in salt water! A less stubborn man might have turned back with satisfaction and pride, but not Mackenzie. Although he now stood on the Pacific shore after crossing a continent, the first white man so to do, he was still bound that he would "reach and view the open ocean," and insisted that they continue down the long inlet now known as the North Bentinch Arm, and into the channels which surround King Island. Here they met a party of Indians who told Mackenzie that only a few weeks before numerous small boats, manned by white men, had been in the inlet. The experiences of these Indians with Captain Vancouver's boat parties—for such they must have been—had not been pleasant. "Macubah" had fired upon them himself, while "Bensins" (probably Vancouver's naturalist-surgeon, Archibald Menzies) had struck one of them with a sword. Naturally enough, then, the natives showed open hostility towards Mackenzie and his men, and as a result they took the precaution of mounting an all-night guard on their first night on the coast. By an early hour the next morning canoe-loads of natives were beginning to arrive in the vicinity, and the young chief who had guided the party to the sea, pleading that the natives here were as "numerous as musquitos, and of a very malignant character," begged Mackenzie

to start back upstream to Friendly Village. Delay seemed unwise, so later that same day the canoes were turned back in the direction from which they had come. Before he left, however, Mackenzie mixed some grease with pigment, and left on the face of the rock on which they had camped the inscription, "Alexander Mackenzie, from Canada, by land, the twenty-second of July one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three". Surely no greater story has ever been told more simply.

The return trip to the Fraser and over the divide to the Parsnip River was comparatively easy. Once embarked on the Parsnip itself, their boats were travelling with the current, and in a single day they were able to cover stretches which had taken seven or eight days to conquer on the way up. Finally, on August 24, the party arrived back at its previous winter's camp on the Peace River.

Mackenzie had accomplished a tremendous task. He and his men were the first Europeans to breach the barrier of the Rockies, the first to navigate the great Fraser River, the first to cross the entire continent from Atlantic to Pacific. For our purposes, the significant fact is that they were the first to penetrate the interior of what is now British Columbia. Among other facts which Mackenzie noted about that new region was one vastly important to him, and vastly significant in the history of British Columbia. The region, he had observed, was very rich in furs. "In no part of the North-West", records his journal, "did I see so much beaver-work within an equal distance." Now Mackenzie was a fur-trader as well as explorer—in fact, he was a fur-trader first—and the company for whom he worked was a company of astute business men. As a result, the significance of his discoveries was very quickly appreciated.

Ten years were to pass, however, before Mackenzie's company could make any very serious attempt to capitalize upon his voyage. For the North West Company was at the moment facing stern competition from its older rival on the Bay, now newly revitalized and ready to change its policy and to send

its men out to compete with the Nor-Westers in the trapping grounds. Even more serious was the revolt within the Nor-Westers' ranks which had created a third competitor in the field. Some of the partners withdrew from the company in protest against the policies and personality of the Company's president, the famous Simon MacTavish, the domineering and often objectionable figure whom the French Canadians had dubbed "Le Marquis." These rebels now revived the old XY Company, and with Mackenzie himself in their ranks they were strong enough to wage a bitter battle for furs all over the great northwest territory. Small wonder that neither side could devote time or energy to the task of exploiting a new field.

In 1804 the real issue between the two companies was removed, for in that year Simon MacTavish died. By this time the lessons of the ruinous competition were more easily seen by both sides, and the companies once more merged as the North West Company. Once again all partners were free to turn their energies to the task of beating their old rival of the Bay by "beating its agents to the furs." Once again new projects could be considered. And first on the list was the plan to occupy and exploit the lands west of the Rocky Mountains which Mackenzie had traversed. Speed was essential now, since in 1803 the United States Congress had voted an appropriation for a "Corps of Discovery" to undertake the exploration of a practicable American route to the sea, and Captains Lewis and Clarke were busy in Illinois recruiting and training the personnel of that corps. It was almost certain that the return of the Lewis and Clarke expedition would be a signal for American traders and trappers to flock into the "Oregon" region, so that the Nor-Westers had perforce to move swiftly. The grand plan for the occupation of the vast regions between the Rockies and the sea had already been sketched by Mackenzie and it was enthusiastically supported by Duncan McGillivray who was now directing the Company's affairs. The appearance of the Americans upon the scene simply made it imperative to carry out that plan now.

## F I V E

### *Through the Canyons to the Sea*

IN AUGUST of 1805 the new and expanded North West Company made the initial move in its plan to occupy and exploit the great Pacific region. At that time Simon Fraser, a young bourgeois of the company, left headquarters at Fort William in charge of an expedition outfitted expressly for this purpose. Fraser is another in the long list of Scotsmen and Scots-Americans whose courage and stubbornness built a new colony. Mackenzie's name we have noted, and that of Alexander Mackay; there are to be many more.

By late fall Fraser and his party had retraced Mackenzie's path up the Peace River. On its bank they built the new post of Rocky Mountain House, and then followed the Peace and the Parsnip Rivers to the place where the latter is joined by the Pack emptying out of McLeod Lake. The junction with this stream Mackenzie had apparently missed, and Fraser was thus able to make the first of many very acid comments upon the abilities of the explorer in whose footsteps he was following. Says Fraser, "Likely he did not see it, and I can account for many other omissions in no other manner than his being asleep at the time he pretends to have been very exact; but was I qualified to make observations and inclined to find fault with him, I could prove that he seldom or ever paid the attention he pretends to have done, and that many of his remarks were not made by himself but communicated by his men."

It was with a double satisfaction, apparently, that Fraser and John Stuart, his second-in-command, now built at the

northern end of the lake out of which the Pack River drains, the first post ever to be set up in the lands west of the Rockies. This establishment at McLeod's Lake, as it was named, was to stand for many years as a distributing and collecting centre, serving all the other posts which were built in the next decade. As befitting a true Scot, even one born in Vermont, Fraser gave the new region the name of New Caledonia. Winter was now closing in, so he retraced his steps to Rocky Mountain House, there to prepare for more ambitious and more extended explorations in the following spring.

In May of 1806 Fraser's expedition again ascended the Peace and the Parsnip Rivers and took supplies in to Fort McLeod, now under the direction of James McDougall. Then Fraser and his lieutenant, John Stuart, returned to the Parsnip River and ascended that stream to its source, just as Mackenzie had done before them. After crossing the height of land, they too embarked upon the Bad River and on July 10 were upon the banks of the north fork of the Fraser. Three days later they were at the mouth of the Nechako River. There they had a nasty experience, for one of the French-Canadian boatmen was set upon by a pair of grizzly bears, and badly mauled before he could escape to the canoe.

In ascending the Nechako and its tributary, the Stuart River, the explorers encountered the usual difficulties of rocks and rapids and numerous portages. Progress consequently was slow, but on July 18 the party entered a broad lake to which Fraser gave the name of his lieutenant. The Carrier Indians in the neighbourhood were at first inclined to be suspicious, but gifts of tobacco and soap soon won them over. Obviously the presents were not alone responsible, however, for the amicable relations, since legend has it that the natives first tasted the tobacco and threw it away in disgust, then tried the soap, only to be dumbfounded by the froth and the bubbles in their mouths. The whites soon showed them the proper use of the two commodities and although the natives never became too fond of the soap they soon were inveterate users of the tobacco. Through such means the friendship of

the Indians was for the moment secured. On Stuart Lake a site for a fort was selected and buildings erected. Fort St. James, or Fort Nakazleh as Fraser named the new post, was for years the most profitable and the most famous of the New Caledonia stations.

While Fraser himself remained here, John Stuart set out to the southwest to continue the work of exploration. On the Nechako itself he explored another large lake and gave to it, and to the new trading post which he established there, the name of his chief. Fort Fraser thus was added to the growing string of North West Company establishments now in operation.

Both Fraser and Stuart spent the winter between the new posts, overseeing the trade with the natives, supervising the construction of a road overland from Fort St. James to Fort McLeod, and in general conducting themselves as efficient fur-traders should. But they had another objective in view. In a letter to McDougall at Fort McLeod in January of 1807, Fraser urged the latter to do all he could to assist in preparing for the projected voyage down the main river, the river which everyone still believed to be the Columbia. He was disappointed that year for the spring brigade brought neither supplies nor the necessary reinforcements to man a voyage of exploration. As a result Fraser spent the summer of 1807 improving the posts already established and pushing an already very profitable trade with the Carrier Indians in the vicinity. We may be sure that he hid from them the opinion which he had formed of them—that these Indians were without exceptions, “sweetmouths, thieves and lyers.”

The brigade which arrived from Fort William in the fall of 1807 brought both supplies and reinforcements. It brought too, specific instructions for Fraser to carry out as soon as possible the plan to explore the river to its mouth. Without further delay the new post of Fort George was established at the mouth of the Nechako, a post designed to serve as a base for the proposed journey. In May of 1808 everything was ready and late in the month the little party set out. Four

canoes carried Fraser, Stuart, Jules Maurice Quesnel, a recent arrival from Canada, nineteen French-Canadian boatmen, and two Indian guides. Their start was auspicious and the first few miles were easy, but by nightfall the real nature of the river was apparent. Never for more than a day or so could they travel in their canoes. Instead there were endless portages to be made, around rapids and over precipitous rock walls. The Indians they met were unanimous, too, in their reports that the difficulties only increased as the stream flowed south. There were occasions when, awful as the river was, the impossibility of portaging forced the party to risk its all in the rapids. At Grand Canyon for example, north of the present-day Pavilion, such an incident was recorded by Fraser in his journal.

"Here the channel contracts to about forty yards and is enclosed by two precipices of immense heights, which, bending towards each other, make it narrower above than below. The water which rolls down this extraordinary passage in tumultuous waves and with great velocity, had a frightful appearance. However, it being absolutely impossible to carry the canoes by land, all hands without hesitation embarked as it were 'a corps perdu' upon the mercy of this awful tide. Once launched, the die was cast, our great difficulty consisted in keeping the canoes within the medium, or, 'fil d'eau,' that is, clear of the precipices on the one side, and from the gulfs formed by the waves on the other. Thus skimming along as fast as lightning, the crews cool and determined, following each other in awful silence, and when we arrived at the end, we stood gazing at each other in silent congratulations at our narrow escape from total destruction."

The feelings of satisfaction were considerably dampened a few moments later, however, when the party went ashore at an Indian camp below the rapids. Here the natives with one accord assured the whites that the rapids above were as nothing compared to those still to be faced. Further travel, they maintained, was impossible for the white strangers, unless they left the river and struck overland to another more

practicable river off to the southeast which would bring them down below the rapids. Their warnings had little effect upon Fraser and Stuart, however. Their instructions had been to trace the river to the sea, and trace it they were determined to do! Before the boatmen could even properly digest the warnings which had been given, the party was on its way again.

Next day Fraser reluctantly concluded that the natives were at least half-correct, for further travel by canoe was obviously impossible. At Pavilion Creek the boats were accordingly hauled ashore, placed upon scaffolds, and covered with tree branches. Such provisions as could not be carried in packs were then divided into two lots. Of these the smaller amount was cached nearby with Fraser taking good care that the Indians witnessed the whole procedure. In the meantime the larger lot was kept hidden from the Indians, and buried at night in a spot some distance removed. Like so many other traders who followed him in the region, Fraser not only was well aware of human frailty but was often able to turn it to his own advantage.

By June 14 the party was at the forks where the Bridge River joins the larger Fraser. Here they were met by an advance party of Lillooet Indians, sent out to welcome the strangers to their village, which lay only a few miles below. Early next morning, with everyone freshly shaven and wearing his best and brightest apparel, they made their ceremonial entrance into what Fraser called "the metropolis of the Lillooets," on the benches of the river where the town of the same name now stands. The village was surrounded by a high palisade, which itself formed one wall of a great communal dwelling extending around all four sides of the square.

The Lillooets, contrary to what their northern neighbours had said about them, were friendly to the white visitors and Fraser was able to secure from them some fish and one of their dugout canoes, a craft infinitely better suited for rough water than the birch bark canoes which they had used in the northern lakes. Much time was spent in "palaver," with one of Fraser's Indians serving as interpreter, and with generous

use of sign language. The whites assured the Lillooets of the benefits which would come to them when the company should establish in this region a post to which they could bring their furs in trade. That the Lillooets had already had some contact with white traders was clear, for several copper kettles and at least one musket of Russian make, were seen in the villagers' possession.

On June 19 Fraser and his men had reached the spot where the Thompson River joins the larger stream. Here, near where the town of Lytton now stands, they found a village of several thousand inhabitants. These natives differed strikingly from the Lillooets both in language and customs; they had horses and had developed a fairly elaborate kind of agriculture. In addition they had a communal and tribal organization much more complex than any yet encountered. Small wonder that Fraser, whose opinion of the Indians was never very high, was much impressed with what he saw, and with the friendly reception which was extended to his party. The great river which empties into the Fraser at this point he named for David Thompson, one of his rivals in the company's service who was even then busy exploring the rivers in the Rocky Mountain Trench several hundred miles to the east.

For the next few days the expedition had to face difficulties before which all their former troubles seemed insignificant. Immediately below the encampment they plunged into the last of the great canyons of the Fraser—the last and infinitely the worst! Travel by canoe was impossible, for the river at this point boils through an unbroken fifty-mile stretch of rapids and cataracts. At places such as the famous Hell's Gate, the banks are but a stone's throw apart (by actual measurement 115 feet) and even the solid rock seems to thrum under the surge of power in the torrent raging past. Here you get a physical sensation transmitted through the soles of your feet, a sensation as if you were standing on the shell of a giant dynamo. The banks are almost precipitous, with narrow rock ledges offering the only footpath. Said Fraser of this region, "I have been for a long period in the Rocky Mountains, but

have never seen anything like this country. It is so wild that I cannot find words to describe our situation at times. We had to pass where no human beings should venture; yet in those places there is a regular footpath impressed, or rather indented upon the very rock by frequent travelling. Besides this, steps which are formed like a ladder, or the shrouds of a ship, by poles hanging to one another and crossed at certain distances with twigs, the whole suspended from the top to the foot of deep precipices and fastened at both extremities to stones and trees, furnish a safe and convenient passage to the Natives; but we, who had not had the advantage of their education and experience, were often in imminent danger when obliged to follow their example."

Thus, inching their dangerous way over narrow ledges hanging over the river, and crossing from one to another by means of the Indian ladders, Fraser, Stuart, and their companions finally won their way through the great canyon, and on June 28 they were encamped near the site of the present day town of Yale. In eight days they had covered only fifty miles of their journey! At Yale they were able to get dugout canoes again and once more they embarked upon the river. Down through a magnificently forested valley which was destined to become one of the most attractive farming areas in the world, the expedition made good time, and their pleasant surroundings helped them to forget what lay behind.

Near the site of the present city of New Westminster the travellers came upon a large Indian village. The Canadian boatmen, full of high spirits now that the canyon was behind, begged Fraser to stop. After some hesitation the leader agreed and the party went ashore. Fraser's account of the meeting there is short, but many years later one of the Indians present told his recollections of what happened. Conversation was by signs only but it seems to have been remarkably uninhibited. The whites first demonstrated their "thunder-sticks" by knocking down willow twigs set up on the mud bank. Then, and this was even more startling to the Indians, some of the boatmen took "little sticks with knobs on them," put them

into their mouths and through the sticks "took fire into their stomachs." And most spectacular of all was the performance of the boatman in the lead canoe, who, as the whites re-embarked and drew away from the bank, "took what looked like a crane, and put the legs over his shoulder, and blew on the head of it and made his fingers dance on the bird's bill! And strange sounds were made!" To experience all in one day, and for the first time, the shock of hearing and seeing gunfire, the taste of tobacco (and what tobacco the boatmen used!) and the peculiar ecstasy inspired by the sound of bagpipes, must have made that day a memorable one for the Indians!

On July 2 this epic struggle of men against natural obstacles finally ended, and Fraser's canoes reached salt water. As so often happens, the whole affair turned now to anticlimax. Simon Fraser himself had planned to press on to the open sea, since they were obviously in an inlet protected by islands off shore. But the state of the expedition's supplies and the belligerent attitude of the Indians in the large village at the river's mouth, both indicated the wisdom of getting away quickly. War canoes filled with natives armed with bows and arrows, spears and clubs, pressed close around Fraser's craft, "making signs and gestures highly inimicable." At the only spot where the whites went ashore, a muddy flat bank not very far from the present buildings of the University of British Columbia, they were surrounded by warriors "howling like so many wolves". The French-Canadian boatmen begged Fraser to leave. And so, with almost ignominious haste the expedition set off up the river again.

The aim of the expedition had been accomplished, and an important, although disappointing, fact determined. Since the place where river and sea met was at latitude  $49^{\circ}$  N., and since the known latitude of the Columbia was  $46^{\circ} 20'$  N., the conclusion was clear. This was not the river whose mouth Captain Gray had discovered, and which Lewis and Clarke had explored, but an entirely different stream. And of its

value, either as a supply route, or as a site for a supply base, Fraser must have had serious doubts.

In the beginning at least, the return trip was comparatively easy. However, the hostility of the coast Indians, tribes which had probably had unfortunate experiences with the maritime traders, posed a constant danger of attack. Once the expedition passed Yale the attitude of the natives improved, but the terrible dangers and difficulties of the canyon had to be faced once again. By July 14 that ordeal was over and the expedition was back again at the forks of the Thompson and Fraser. Little time was lost in pushing on, and by August 6 the party was back at its base at Fort George.

Simon Fraser had performed a tremendous task. At the time, however, the importance of his work must have been minimized. His employers of the North West Company were anxious to secure a post on the sea and a safe route to join that post with the interior forts. If such a route could be found, Fort St. James, Fort Fraser, and Fort McLeod could all be supplied from the new coastal base, and the long and arduous haulage of trade goods overland from Fort William could be eliminated. But Fraser obviously had not found it, for no man in his right senses would call Fraser's river a route at all. "No highway here!" is the lesson which its canyons and cataracts combine to teach. Small wonder, then, that little was made of Fraser's voyage for many years. The great problem of the fur trade in New Caledonia was still unsolved, the great river still unconquered.

The routes which Fraser and Stuart explored and mapped in the northerly region of New Caledonia proper have been used by the fur trade from their day to this, and their paths can easily be followed. Today's Highway 16, which strikes off from Prince George (Fraser's Fort George) up the Nechako River, follows the old route up to Fraser Lake itself. From thence it runs north west, skirts the bottom end of the Babine Mountains and then follows the Bulkely River to the Skeena at the town of Hazelton, and thence to the sea at Prince Rupert. This is as yet for the tourist the only practicable road joining

the interior plateau of British Columbia with the sea coast, apart that is, from the Cariboo Highway which follows the Fraser itself.

The traveller who takes this route from Fort George to Prince Rupert will enjoy it. He will see more, and bigger, moose than on any other road on the continent, and may even need to stop his car for these and other animals. And some combination of circumstances has produced in the lakes along this way the biggest trout you'll ever see. If you catch them, that is, and wise anglers do—by very deep trolling.

The eastern portion of this road, from Prince George to Fraser Lake, is thus intimately connected with one of the earliest chapters in British Columbia's history. The western half, on the other hand, is much more obviously connected with the very latest chapters. This section of the road was only completed after the outbreak of war, when it seemed wise to provide a military road leading back from a coast which most of us thought of as being in danger of Japanese attack. Then, too, in even more recent years, the spectacular power and aluminium project at Kitimat at the head of Douglas Channel, has given this road a new significance, for it will soon, so we are assured, be linked with what is probably the most elaborate and the most costly project ever developed in Canada.

The other major road in the region which Simon Fraser and John Stuart first explored, is the new John Hart Highway. (Is it characteristic of our Canadian dullness that we name our roads not for the pioneers or explorers of early days, but for the politicians of the very recent past?) This road swings north from Prince George across the height of land and down to the Crooked River and by way of that stream to Fort McLeod, the former supply base for the New Caledonia trade. Up to this point the road has followed the path which Indians and fur traders alike used ever since Fraser and Stuart first followed it. At Fort McLeod—actually the oldest white establishment in British Columbia—the highway swings away from the old paths, crosses the Parsnip River which Mackenzie and

Fraser had both followed and strikes east and north over Pine Pass and then down through the foothills to Dawson Creek and the Alaska Highway. Here in the Peace River block is the latest Canadian frontier; here is a new wheat and barley country which is rapidly coming into its own; here is the jumping off spot for a trip which many of us will be taking soon, up the long 1500 miles of the Alaska Highway to Fairbanks.

Along these highways out of Prince George, for the first hundred miles or so, at least, you are following the roads which the Nor-Westerns pushed through the bush and the swamp in order to carry on their trade with the Indians. Along the river banks—the Fraser, the Nechako, the Crooked—you still can see, wherever the bull-dozers of the highway crews have not obliterated them, the paths followed by those hardy fellows who followed Mackenzie and Fraser and Stuart over the Rockies into New Caledonia.

Mackenzie's name is, of course, the honoured one, probably because he was wise enough to take the trouble to write about himself and his travels, and thus ensured his own fame. But of the crew which Simon Fraser led over the Rockies and down to the sea, the name of the leader is the only one now remembered. Fraser himself was worthy of honour. He was a modest man — of the journal which he kept he said, "It is exceeding ill wrote, worse worded and not well spelt"—and the story that he was offered a knighthood as a reward for his work, and refused it, may possibly be true. Perhaps, of course, it was not modesty but a native Scots caution which dictated the refusal, for Fraser was never wealthy enough to keep up a title.

In his capacity as trader the Vermont-born Scot was one of the best servants the Company ever had. No detail was too small for him to note and to study, from the method of baling skins to the proper manufacture of pipes for presents to the Indians. When word of the death of John Stuart's brother reached New Caledonia, Fraser sent to his friend a letter of sympathy and the pious hope that the brother "had

only left this world of trouble and vexation to go to everlasting bliss." It is perhaps characteristic of Fraser that he used the same letter to point out to Stuart that in the last shipment of goods received from him (at the moment Fraser was at Fort St. James and Stuart at the supply depot at Fort McLeod) the trousers for Fraser himself were so small "that I cannot put them on." Most scandalous of all, the shipment had actually included a handkerchief which was not listed on the invoice accompanying the goods!

John Stuart was for most of Fraser's time in New Caledonia not only his second-in-command but his closest friend as well. A quiet, soft-spoken man, Stuart had served in the Royal Engineers, then migrated to Canada to join the North West Company. His pride was in his knowledge, and everyone who met him was impressed by the fact that "he had read and reflected much," as one put it. Perhaps on closer acquaintance he may have been a little pedantic in the display of his knowledge, for one of his subordinates in a letter home confided that while Mr. Stuart was a "good man," still "a person would require to be possessed of the patience of Job and the wisdom of Solomon to agree with him on all subjects!" For over fifteen years after he crossed the Rockies with Fraser in 1806, Stuart worked for the Company in New Caledonia, mapping, exploring and opening new posts. In fact, perhaps even more than Fraser, John Stuart deserves the title of "father of British Columbia."

James McDougall, who for most of this time was in charge at Fort McLeod, was another of Fraser's subordinates in New Caledonia. He was not so highly regarded by his superior as was Mr. Stuart; in fact on at least one occasion he was reprimanded by Fraser in no uncertain terms. "Your conduct at Trout Lake (Fort McLeod) is highly blamable and your character as a Trader much blasted which you can only recover, but by your future assiduity and attention to your business, which I would be most happy at, and will befriend you as much as lays in my Power." Perhaps one should add in fairness to McDougall, that in this instance what Fraser

was criticizing was his inability to control the amours of his French-Canadian boatmen and their assorted Indian wives. But that was a task which defeated sterner masters than McDougall!

Certainly if we were making an honour roll of the pioneers of New Caledonia, we should at least mention these same boatmen. For many years the trade of the Nor-Westers, and of the Hudson's Bay Company as well after 1821, depended in large part upon the skill and courage of the men who manned the canoes and bateaux which plied interior routes. Most of them were French-Canadian, happy-go-lucky children in men's clothing, caring for nothing as long as they had a boat to paddle, tobacco to smoke, and, occasionally, a "leettle neep" of rum. Fraser's experience with his boatmen was probably not typical, for he seems to have had the misfortune to recruit a crew which had more than the normal share of timidity and delicate health. On the trip into New Caledonia, for example, more than half of the crew suffered disability in some form or other. "We are really ill in regard to the men," records Fraser in his journal one day. "Saucier is sick, Gagnon complains of his side, Blais of having a pain and a lump upon his stomach, Gervais is not well, and Lalonde is not able to steer his canoe." Since he was taking the boatmen where they did not want to go, one might suspect that some of the ailments were like those which small boys sometimes develop at eight o'clock on a school morning. For the relief of all these disabilities, either real or imaginary, one must remember that the expedition carried only salts, castor-oil, and friar's balsam. Of course, if one of these more or less infallible remedies failed to cure, the patient would, naturally be bled.

To add to Fraser's difficulties, one of his crew was the well-named La Malice. This was the man who had been left in charge of the new post at Fort McLeod when it was first established and who had deserted the post before the winter was over. Demoted to the rank of boatman again, La Malice was always in trouble. On the way up the Bad River Fraser

had to check him for trying to pole his canoe through rapids to avoid the trouble of the portage. A few moments later the canoe of which he was in charge, left with only the bow on shore, slid off into the stream and down the rapids. Carelessness, possibly! Shortly after this incident, La Malice fell ill, and was "very troublesome in his illness." In fact, "he used more than half of the medicine (God knows good or bad) we possessed!"

A few days later La Malice was giving trouble again. Says Fraser in his journal, "He now threatens to remain upon the beach and not embark, alleging that by agreement he is not obliged to voyage in this part of the country and not well taken care of. When we prepared to leave him here with a bag of Pemmican, exclusive of the other provisions we had, and a man to conduct him down to Trout Lake, not one of them would consent to remain unless absolutely compelled and, as he is brutish and appears as if inclined to commit suicide, we did not think it right to compel a man to remain with him, so we will be obliged to take him with us, and attend to him the best way we can; and yet, I must own that he is not very deserving, but it is a duty incumbent on one Christian to help another in distress and we will continue to take care of him, more for our sake than his."

Fraser must have later sometimes wondered if fulfilling one's Christian duty was really a profitable course, for La Malice continued to plague him. Four months later, his recovery apparently complete, he was involved in a knifing affray with another boatman, Blais, at Fort McLeod, over the possession of an Indian woman there, and in general was making himself a nuisance again.

Fortunately for the Nor-Westerners, La Malice was the worst case, and certainly not typical of his kind. Following on the heels of Fraser came other Nor-West traders bringing more of the "Canucks," while overland down the Columbia came the Astor expeditions, officered largely by former Nor-Westerners, and staffed again by the ubiquitous French-Canadian voya-

geurs. Their exploits in the Pacific Northwest richly deserve the full telling, but it is a job for the novelist, not the historian, since they left no records but their names on the company books, and the legends which still remain of their prowess in the woods and on the rivers. One other legacy they left. There are many Allards, Gagnons and Lalondes among the interior Indians today; almost as many as there are McDougalls, McKays, and MacDonalds, in fact!

S I X

*Road of the "Star-Man"*

WHILE SIMON FRASER was busy exploring the northern reaches of his river, another Nor-Wester had penetrated the Rockies by way of Howse Pass and the Blaeberry River, and had thus reached the banks of the Columbia River itself, at a spot about ten miles north of the present city of Golden. On June 22, 1807, Thompson noted in his daily journal his wish "May God in his mercy give me to see where the waters of this river flow to the western ocean." It is gratifying to see that his wish was granted, for if ever a man deserved well of his Maker it was the same David Thompson.

Here was a man who does not fit the usual pattern of the Nor-Westerns. To begin with, he was not Scottish, nor even half Scottish. Born in London, he was educated as a charity student at the famous Grey Coat School in Westminster, and was then apprenticed to the Hudson's Bay Company and turned over to the famous Philip Turnor, the Company's surveyor, for instruction. His fellow student was Peter Fidler, another who was to contribute a great deal to the proper charting of the American wilderness but one whose fame rests principally upon the will which he left behind him when he died. (Fidler stipulated that his money was to be invested at compound interest until August 17, 1969, the two hundredth anniversary of his own birth. At that time the whole property is to go to the eldest living heir of his own youngest, and favourite son. There was a will, and there is an heir, and the date is fast approaching, but unfortunately diligent search has failed to reveal that any money ever was invested!)

Thirteen years Thompson spent in the service of the Bay Company in America. Then, attracted as Bay men often were by the much brighter prospects of promotion in the North West Company, he offered his services to the Montreal firm and was immediately engaged and sent out to the west. Legend still insists that Thompson was seeking adventure and a more active life when he made this change, but there is very little either in his make-up or his career to indicate any very great daring in David Thompson. A short, stocky man, affecting long hair and a set of bangs across his forehead, he was certainly a tireless worker, but he had to have both push and direction from others.

Thompson joined the younger firm at a time when great changes were in the air. The directors of the Company, men such as the famous Duncan McGillivray, were now convinced of the wisdom of Alexander Mackenzie's plan to alter the company's trading methods, to come to an agreement with the Bay Company for the use of Hudson's Bay itself as a base on the east, and to find a corresponding base on the Pacific shore. Success in these two objectives would thus eliminate what both Mackenzie and McGillivray saw as the fatal weakness in the Nor-Western mode of operations, the long land haul from Montreal to the western posts.

McGillivray himself had already begun the job of pushing through the Rockies to the Columbia waters. In 1801 he crossed through Howse Pass by way of today's Banff-Lake Louise holiday area, and returned by way of the Athabasca Pass some fifty miles further north. He was convinced that communications could be opened with the coast and he was determined to see the job done. And when McGillivray made up his mind something, or somebody, had to give. This was the man who once undertook to drive out the "free traders" who used to come up from American bases to trade in what the Nor-Westerns thought was their preserve. And drive them out he did! One such trader carrying on profitable dealings near Grand Portage, found himself confronted by McGillivray and an order to vacate within twenty-four hours. "By whose

authority?" the fur trader demanded. "I'll show you my authority!" returned McGillivray and whipped out his knife. One slash opened the trader's tent from top to bottom. Another spilled his pack of trade goods on the ground. "Twenty-four hours from now it will be your throat!" growled McGillivray, and stalked away. The fur trader left! This was the man who now ordered David Thompson into the Columbia region. With Thompson into the new territory went his sextant, his Bible, and his half-breed wife (the order is the right order, I am sure) and during the next eight years the Kootenay-Okanagan region, north and south of what is now the international boundary, came to know the "star-man" well. Just as Simon Fraser had been, Thompson was charged by his superiors in Fort William with the dual task of establishing trading relations in the new territory and of carrying on explorations with a view to establishing a base on the Pacific through which to supply the new posts. His explorations in 1807 and in subsequent years took him south over the height of land to the headwaters of the Kootenay River and down that stream into what is now the state of Montana. Trading posts at Flathead Lake in that region and at Lake Pend d'Oreille in what is now Idaho, were soon proving the very profitable nature of the new regions. But these posts, like those of Fraser and Stuart in New Caledonia, still had to be supplied overland, from Fort William, and this was a long, dangerous, and expensive job. More than ever the directors of the Company were now determined to establish a base of operations on the coast.

In 1810 the foundation of John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company, and its preparations to invade the northwest, made further delay unwise. Astor's company had recruited the services of some of the North West Company's best men, such men as Alexander Mackay, Mackenzie's lieutenant in his epic journey to the Pacific in 1793, and David and Robert Stuart, nephews of Simon Fraser's second-in-command. The new company planned to operate from a base to be established at the mouth of the Columbia. To that end two expeditions

were sent out in 1811, one to travel overland on the route discovered by Lewis and Clarke, the other to go by sea around the Horn. Here was a threat of competition, real competition because it was from men trained in company methods and following a plan of operation which the Nor-Westerners themselves had recognized as being the most efficient for the nature of the trade in these far regions.

Thompson himself, of course, could not have known about the projects of the Astorians; if he had he might have hastened in his slow methodical explorations. At any rate, in 1810 he actually started back to Montreal with his family for what he probably thought was a well-earned vacation. His superiors at Fort William had other views, however, and Thompson was ordered back over the mountains to get on with the real job, the exploration of a practicable route to the coast. His way through the Howse Pass was blocked by Piegan Indians on the war-path, or at least by reports of such, for they were never seen. Thompson, never of the Buffalo Bill or George Custer type, preferred to avoid possible trouble, and turned north to follow a route closely followed by the present Banff-Jasper Highway, skirted the Columbia Icefields and crossed the mountains by way of Athabasca Pass. This route led the brigade down to the Columbia at its most northerly point, the top of the famous Big Bend. At the place where the Canoe River joins the Columbia, Thompson and his crew now set up their winter quarters. The Indians of the neighbourhood all agreed that travel down the river from that point was impossible, at least by canoe, so that when spring came the white men set out for the sea by travelling upstream, not down. For the first three hundred miles the journey was relatively easy as they went up the river to its headwaters in Columbia Lake, and then across the flat plain now known as Canal Flats. Once embarked on the Kootenay River Thompson and his men were on familiar paths, for this region was now a Nor-West trading ground. There is no indication at all that they thought of their mission as being the "exciting race to the sea" which so many historians have described.

Nor is there any evidence that Thompson and his men were in any sense aware that they were engaged in a "duel for an empire" with the Astor Company. Indeed, Thompson's passage through the region was more like that of a conscientious travelling salesman covering his territory, calling at all the posts, and carefully keeping his records as he went.

Travelling overland from the Kootenay, the party made its last stop at the newly established Spokane House on the River of the same name. From that point they struck downstream to the Columbia and thence to the coast. Not until July 15 did Thompson and his men arrive at the sea. Four months earlier Astor's ship, the *Tonquin*, had crossed the bar at the river's mouth and the buildings of Fort Astoria were already occupied. Possibly the Nor-West Company had already prepared itself for this eventuality, for according to Gabriel Franchère, one of Astor's men who now welcomed Thompson to their quarters, the latter carried with him a letter from McGillivray offering to withdraw from the fur region west of the mountains on condition that the Americans withdraw from the regions east of the barrier. Possibly, but knowing McGillivray it is hard to believe! Whatever the truth of the matter, there was little that Thompson could do at Astoria, and his stay was short. On his return from the coast he followed a new route, by way of the Columbia, through the Arrow Lakes, and then by way of the Upper river around Priest Rapids and the famous Death Rapids and thence back to his old winter quarters at Boat Encampment.

David Thompson had failed to establish his company on the coast, but his fame as explorer and cartographer was already secure. The whole of southeastern British Columbia was his field; he was the first white man to set eyes on the incredible beauty of the Kootenay Lakes and rivers; he was the first to sense the potential value of this and the lovely Okanagan valley further to the west; his charts and maps and records made it easy for others to follow his footsteps.

All you need now to follow Thompson's path is the family car and one of the road maps which the oil companies are so

eager to supply. If you approach from the east, from the Jasper-Banff National Parks, you will already be conditioned to scenery, but you will still be impressed. From the highway which runs through those parks you can turn west at Lake Louise and drive through the actual heart of the Rocky Mountains, over the Great Divide and by way of the Kicking Horse Pass down to the Columbia at Golden. Tourist etiquette requires that you must stop at the Divide, get out of the car, and take pictures of the rustic arch which marks the top of the continent. But spare some time, too, to look far below to the floor of the valley, carpeted for most of the summer with an amazing rug of wild flowers, and far above, to the snow-covered peaks of the mountains. Just to sit through those magic moments as dusk comes, when the sun suddenly turns the mountain tops to flashing cones of light, then disappears, and first a smoky gray, then a deepening velvety purple settles over the whole silent world—just that experience alone is worth all the miles you'll cover in getting there.

At the end of the mountain road you will come down the hill into the little town of Golden. It has an importance of its own, of course, both as a railroad divisional point, and as a resort centre for hunters of the big game which abounds in this country. But for most tourists Golden's real importance is that it is the beginning (or the end) of the Big Bend Highway. Probably no road on the North American continent has been more maligned than this one. Shaped like the top section of your fly rod when a five pound Kamloops trout is on, the road hugs the Columbia for almost 200 miles as it sweeps far north to the spot where David Thompson made his winter encampment in 1810, and then turns due south past the city of Revelstoke and on into the Arrow Lakes. It has been variously described as the highest, as the crookedest, and as the roughest, road in the world. In truth it is none of these, but simply a gravelled road, rather well-gravelled too, with a few sharp turns, but none spectacularly so, and with a surface which in summer at least is usually reasonably smooth. The chances are, in fact, that when you finish the Big Bend you

will, like most of us who have travelled it, be wondering what all the shouting was about.

From Golden the Big Bend highway very soon runs away from the signs of human habitation. On the outskirts of Golden you will see the usual clutter of auto courts and motels one of them a "genuine" Swiss Village, with "real" Swiss bungalows, and "real" Swiss mountain guides. Ten miles out of Golden the highway crosses the Blaeberry, the stream which David Thompson followed the first time he penetrated the Rockies. Then, a few miles further on, the road passes the lumber piles and railroad station of Donald. Here the C.P.R. right of way leaves both the highway and the Columbia and strikes off west to Revelstoke. And here the auto traveller becomes really aware that he is in the wilderness. At this point, just to emphasize this fact, the river itself, which up to this point has been a placid sort of stream, suddenly kicks down into Redgrove Canyon and its awesome rapids. For miles now the river and the highway both run almost due north-west. Little streams dash down from the hills and mountains on the right hand side, and little lakes like the Bush Lakes invite one to stop here, for your picnic meal or for an overnight camp. Fat little trout and great, lean, voracious mosquitoes both will have a welcome for you.

At many places along this stretch of the road it is possible to climb down to the bank of the river itself. Trails have been cut by the B.C. Forest Service crews and the going is usually fairly easy. And once down on the river—at Surprise Rapids for example—you will begin to appreciate the difficulties which confronted the pioneers who had to use the river as their highway, and who had to "line" their rafts and boats down through these rapids. It was through this stretch of water that packers from Montana had their troubles trying to get their cargoes of liquor through to the construction camps during the days of the railroad building. One packer, more venturesome than wise, tried to avoid all troubles by packing his precious rum in oak casks, made as tight as it was possible to make them. The barrels were then turned loose in

the rapids and the packer hurried off to the far end to pick them up again. Sad to relate, not one came through intact. For a day or so, however, or so one prospector is supposed to have noticed, "the old river is as mean and nasty as ever, but she shore makes nice drinkin' water!"

About seventy miles from Golden the road reaches Kinbasket, and the river widens into a lovely lake with the same name. From the northern end it then dips into a long series of rapids; it is almost as if the river knew that it was going to be turned back very soon, and was expending its energies in a last vicious fling at the mountains before it. After some twenty miles of canyon and rapid, the Columbia enters a wide valley, is joined by the Canoe River, and finally makes its Big Bend to the south again. Up above the river the highway slavishly follows suit. Just below the mouth of the Canoe, the road is carried over a long bridge, up to the auto court and restaurant of Boat Encampment, and then off to the south. For years Boat Encampment was an important station for the fur-trade. Here the brigades coming up the Columbia transferred from boats to horses on their way through the Athabasca Pass to Edmonton and Fort William. And here the brigade coming west with trade goods left their horses and took to the bateaux for the long and perilous river passage before them.

Perilous indeed it was. Fifty miles below the bend the river plunges into Death Rapid, the worst stretch of water in the whole 1,200 miles of its course. Practically every other rapid, on practically every other river in British Columbia, has a legend which has some hero successfully running its length. But not Death Rapid! And if you will park your car in the place provided for it up on the highway, and follow the trail marked by the Forest Service down to the river, you will see why.

The reason for the name of this rapid is worth the telling. In 1817, a little party of seven men, most of them sick members of a brigade which was heading east, left Boat Encampment with the intention of running the river down to Kettle Falls on their way to Spokane House. Lining down through the

Rapids, the rope snapped, and canoe and provisions were both lost. Trying to push through the canyon on foot, with the river rising higher each day, the already weak men suffered such hardships that on the third day one of them, a French-Canadian boatman called Macon, died. Ross Cox, a member of the brigade which this party had left at Boat Encampment, tells us in his journal that Macon's comrades "thereupon divided his remains in equal parts between them, on which they subsisted for several days." One by one the others met the same fate, until only two were left, La Pierre and Dubois. Camped somewhere on Upper Arrow Lake, Dubois attacked La Pierre who "was obliged in self-defence to cut Dubois' throat." Several days later with Dubois only partly consumed, La Pierre was found by Indians who brought him to Kettle Falls where he told his story, and was believed.

About a third of the way down, the western arm of the Big Bend the highway crosses the Goldstream River. Here in 1865 there occurred a gold rush which brought several thousand men to its banks. Steamboats operated on the Columbia as far as Downie Creek, some thirty miles south of Goldstream, and there was tremendous traffic up and downstream. But the rush was short-lived. By the fall of 1867 not a miner was left in the Big Bend diggings.

At Downie Creek the little cabins of an auto-court sit where at one time in 1865 a thousand miners were camped. Less than forty miles farther south the Big Bend Highway ends at Revelstoke—a city which is about as far a cry from pioneer days as a city can be. The tourist who wants to follow the Columbia further, to keep on the route which David Thompson explored, can drive on to the head of Arrow Lake. There he must take to the ferry, however, for around that lake no highway yet exists.

We started our journey around the Big Bend at the town of Golden. We might have noticed our sign-posts there more carefully, however, and remarked that we might at that point have turned south instead of north, and gone up the Columbia

instead of down. And we would still have been following Thompson's path, for this is actually the route he took in 1811 on his way to the sea. The road follows the river quite closely through Radium Hot Springs, where the highway from Banff swings in from Kootenay Park, around Lake Windermere, past the resort at Fairmont Hot Springs and then around Columbia Lake, the real source of the river, to the town of Canal Flats. There is at this point merely a mile of level plain between the little stream heading north for the Columbia and the much bigger stream the Kootenay, heading south.

Of late there has been much talk about the possibility of a canal to join the two waterways, and what it would mean to the valley. I heard such talk in the summer of 1953; probably a visitor in 1885 would have heard the same things as I did. In fact the canal was a more real thing then, for it actually was constructed. Not as a public works project, however. An energetic English empire-builder, by name Waillie-Grohman, got permission to build the canal and in 1888 it was completed. No boats operated on it, possibly because no boats could get to it, but it did serve to drain flood waters out of the Kootenay River. Of course, it drained those flood waters into the Columbia and washed them over the little farms down the valley to Lake Windermere. Finally the settlers from that direction took direct action, and closed the canal by building a dam across its eastern end!

A year later, in 1893, a steamboat finally arrived on the upper Kootenay. The *North Star* was built in Jennings, Montana, equipped with paddle wheel and boiler, and her captain, Frank Armstrong, set off for the north. After working his way through very difficult waters almost to the headwaters of the Kootenay, he now asked for "sea-room" to reach the Columbia. Obliging enough, the townsfolk of Canal Flats tore out the dam and let the *North Star* through to begin its career as supply boat for the upper Columbia. No other boat followed in her wake, and in a few years the canal was so choked that none could.

Past Canal Flats the highway follows the Kootenay for about thirty miles, then dives off to the west through the town of Kimberley, the location of the great Sullivan mine, which supplies most of the province's smelters with lead, zinc, and copper. Having paid its proper respects to economics, the road swings back almost to the river again, then changes its mind and turns south to the city of Cranbrook. Here it joins the highway from the east, the highway which will eventually be the western end of the Trans-Canada road. (Always assuming, that is, that the voice of geography will be louder than that of the Calgary Chamber of Commerce!)

From Cranbrook you follow a route which David Thompson failed to explore, one of the few indeed in this part of the continent which he did not carefully investigate, and follow the shore of Moyie Lake, and around the loop to Creston. If you are a fisherman be sure to leave yourself the time (you will take it anyway) to wet a line in the streams along the road below Moyie where the highway crosses or runs alongside some very inviting stretches of fast water.

At Creston you enter the fruit country. Here the highway turns north and for forty-odd miles follows the shore of Kootenay Lake through one of the loveliest countrysides in Canada. At Kootenay Bay the road ends, and a ferry hauls automobile and driver across the lake to Balfour. Most traffic here keeps on west towards Nelson and Trail on the Columbia proper, through the little towns of Castlegar and Brilliant, and the farming lands made famous by their Doukhobor owners. You can if you like, however, turn north from Balfour, and by way of Kaslo and Nakusp reach the Upper Arrow Lake where the ferry will take you up to Arrowhead and the road back to Revelstoke.

For the traveller of the Kootenay-Big Bend regions there is little doubt that the one thing he will first and longest remember is the scenery. From the almost fantastic grandeur of the Rockies on the Field-Golden road, to the lush country of the south Kootenays, to the lovely wilderness of the Big

Bend itself, every day's journey offers something for the eye to behold. Fish and game are there in abundance, and pleasant cities too. Along the way the Forest Service provides camp sites where you may pitch your tent and cook over an open fire, but a few miles further on you will find tourist accommodation of the plushest—and most expensive kind.

Time now to stop being the tourist guide, and to turn once again back to the days of the fur-brigades and the beginnings of white occupation of British Columbia; back to the appearance on the Pacific coast for the first time of a trading establishment, the post of the Americans at Fort Astoria.

S E V E N

*Knights in Grey Blanket Cloth*

By 1811 the Nor-West Company was firmly established in both the New Caledonia and the Columbia regions. In the northern area it was never challenged, but in the south it had to face the agents of John Jacob Astor and their determined bid to secure furs in the vast area drained by the lower Columbia and its tributaries. For a short while the competition between the two companies was sharp, indeed. The Astorians and the Nor-Westers, for example, both established posts at the junction of the North and South Thompson Rivers, near the site of today's city of Kamloops, and for over a year the two establishments, separated only by a few hundred yards, competed for the favour—and the furs—of the Indians of the neighbourhood. The same situation existed at Spokane, where the Astorians in 1812 set up a post to compete with the establishment which Thompson had built a few years earlier. Apparently on the surface the amenities of trade were observed no matter how cut-throat the competition really was. Alexander Ross, one of the Astorians' chief traders, visited Spokane in 1812, shortly after his firm had established there. Said he, "During the three days . . . I had frequent opportunities of observing the sly and underhand dealings of the competing parties. . . . When the two parties happened to meet they make the amplest protestations of friendship and kindness, and a stranger, unacquainted with the politics of Indian trade, would have pronounced them sincere, but the moment their backs were turned they tore each other to pieces.

Each party had its scouts in all directions, watching the motions of the Indians, and laying plots and plans to entrap and foil each other. He that got the most skins, never minding the cost or the crime, was the cleverest fellow; and under such tutors the Indians were apt disciples."

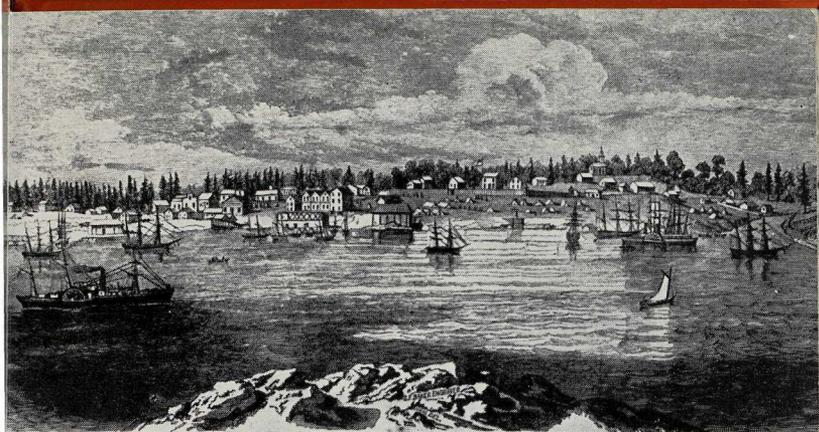
The competition between the two companies was very short lived, however. Under the stress of war in 1813 the Americans in Astoria sold out to the representatives of the Nor-Westers and the monopoly was restored once more. But by this time the question of sovereignty in the whole area was being discussed; sooner or later the issue was going to be not whether a British or an American company should enjoy a monopoly of the fur trade, but whether British or American sovereignty would be recognized. And before that larger question was settled, the North West Company itself had disappeared, for in 1821 the old association was absorbed by the larger and still older Hudson's Bay Company.

During the hey-day of their control of the fur trade in the region beyond the mountains, the Nor-Westers wrote a romantic chapter into the history of the west. The partners, the traders, the clerks, and the boatmen of the Company were the real pioneers of British Columbia, the men who first saw its beauties and who first pushed along its intricate river passages. The work of exploration was only incidental to the main job of getting furs but it was none the less thoroughly carried on. The business of the Company, both in Oregon and in New Caledonia, was carried on in the face of staggering physical difficulties. The posts were supplied with their goods from Montreal by way of Fort William, and the costs of transport by canoe and pack over that long distance made it obviously unprofitable to send west anything but trade goods, i.e., goods to be used in trade with the Indians for furs. With the exception of a very few items such as tea, salt, and the inevitable spirits, no supplies were sent to the posts. As a result, the task of provisioning the stations was placed squarely upon the shoulders of the bourgeois or wintering partner in charge of the area. For prairie posts situated in country still

teeming with game, it was not too difficult to supply the staff with its food. In New Caledonia, however, the situation was quite different. Difficulties of travel put very severe limitations on the distance to which hunting parties could go, and the immediate vicinity of the posts was often very thinly stocked with game. As a result, the salmon which came up the rivers each summer had to serve as the staple of diet. Fresh salmon in season, and dried or salted salmon for the rest of the year, provided the main item of a fare about which there was always much grumbling.

The fact that the summer run of salmon was never very reliable, either as to numbers or time of arrival, was a matter of grave concern. Some years the run was a small one and then "lean times and hard scratching" lay ahead. Some years, too, the arrival of the fish was delayed, and anxious weeks passed in awaiting them. In the journals of Fort St. James, for example, there is an entry for August 2, 1811: "Our whole stock of provisions in the fort, for ten persons, consists of five (salted) salmon only. It is impossible, at this season, to take fish out of this lake or river. Unless the salmon from the sea soon make their appearance, our condition will be deplorable." On August 10, the journal notes that the chief trader had sent "all our people, consisting of men, women and children, to gather berries at Pinchy," an Indian village on Pinchi Lake, some fifteen miles from the fort. When the salmon which they all professed to dislike so heartily finally arrived in the lake towards the end of the month, its arrival was hailed with delight, and by the end of October some twenty-five thousand fish, dried or salted, were stored away against the coming year.

In charge at New Caledonia for its first three years of existence as a district was Simon Fraser. As wintering partner he was responsible for seeing that furs in sufficient volume went down to Fort William each year in exchange for the trade goods coming in. Here is another wonderful Canadian story that has never properly been told, the story of the brigades which carried trade goods out to the west and then

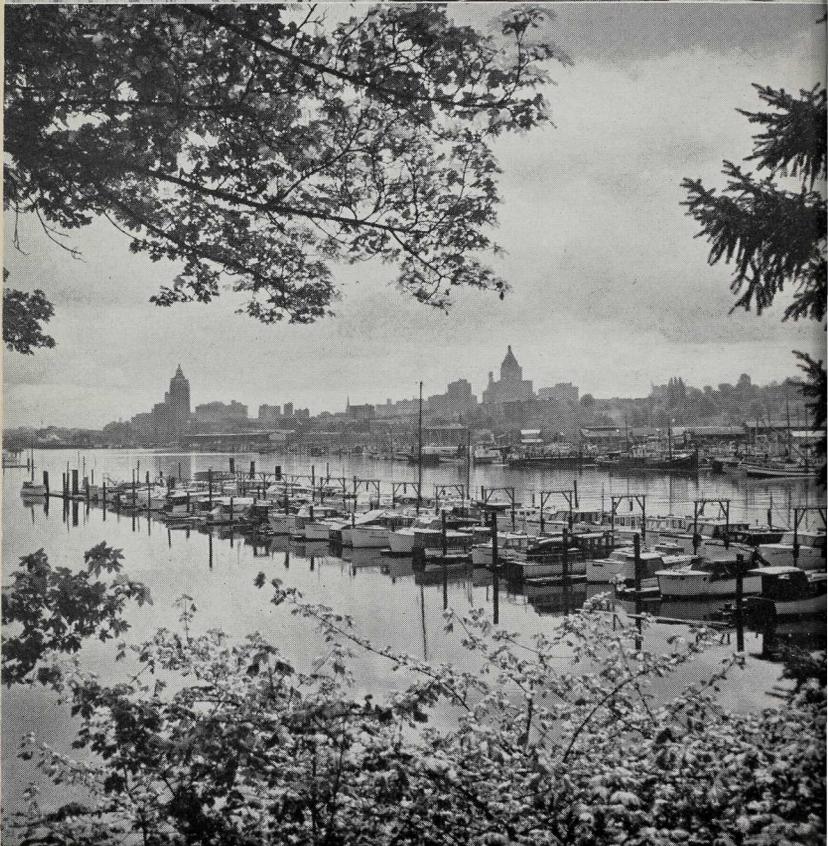


*Above:* VIEW OF VICTORIA VANCOUVER ISLAND, JULY, 1858.

*(Courtesy Provincial Archives, Victoria)*

*Below:* VIEW OF VICTORIA AS IT IS TODAY.

*(Courtesy B.C. Govt. Travel Bureau, Victoria)*

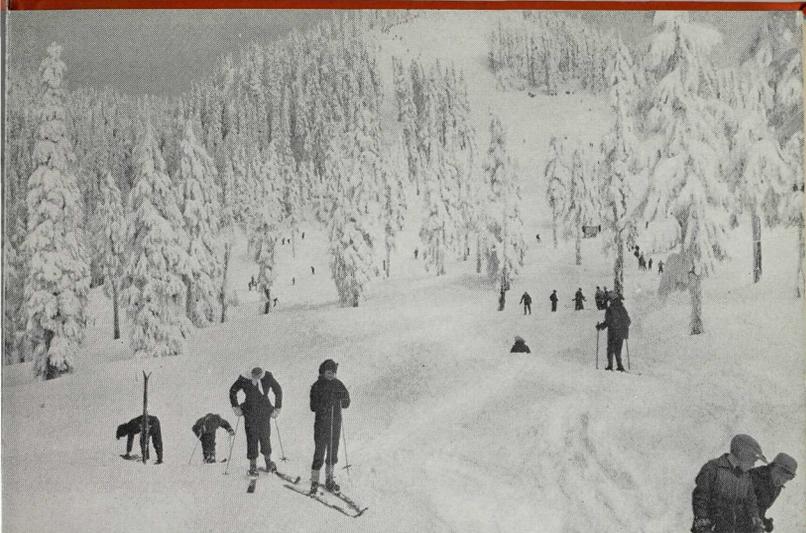


*Above:* VIEW OF VANCOUVER (THEN GASTOWN) IN 1884.

*(Courtesy Provincial Archives, Victoria)*

*Below:* VANCOUVER TODAY, LOOKING ACROSS THE HARBOUR.

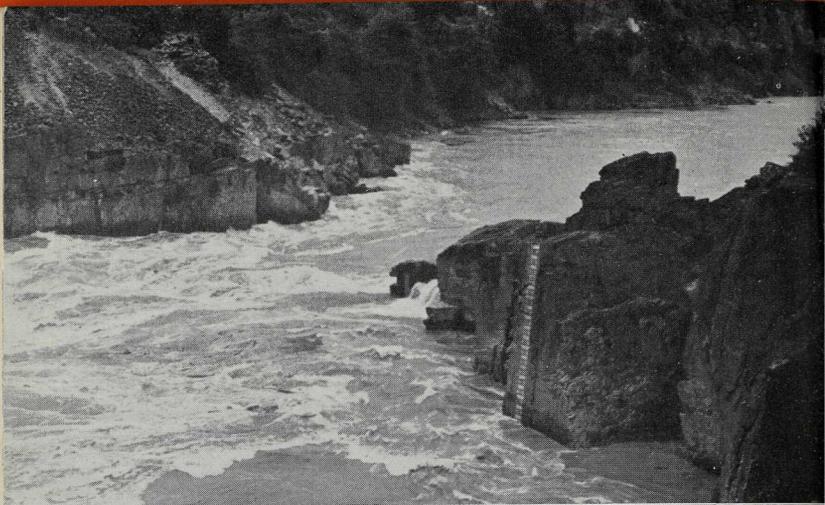
*(Courtesy B.C. Govt. Travel Bureau, Victoria)*



*Above:* SKIING ON GROUSE MOUNTAIN, FORTY-FIVE MINUTES' DRIVE FROM THE CENTRE OF VANCOUVER.

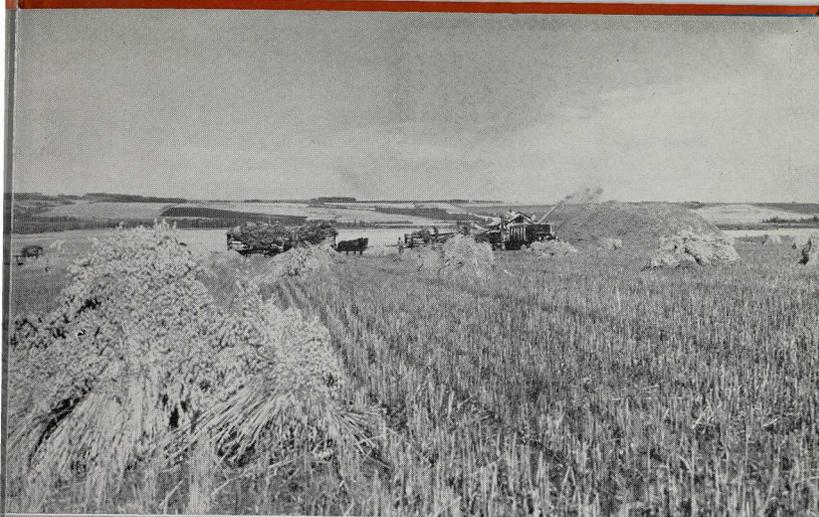
*Below:* AN ORCHARD AT NARAMATA, A TYPICAL OKANAGAN SCENE.

*(Courtesy B.C. Govt. Travel Bureau, Victoria)*



*Above:* CLOSE-UP VIEW OF HELL'S GATE.

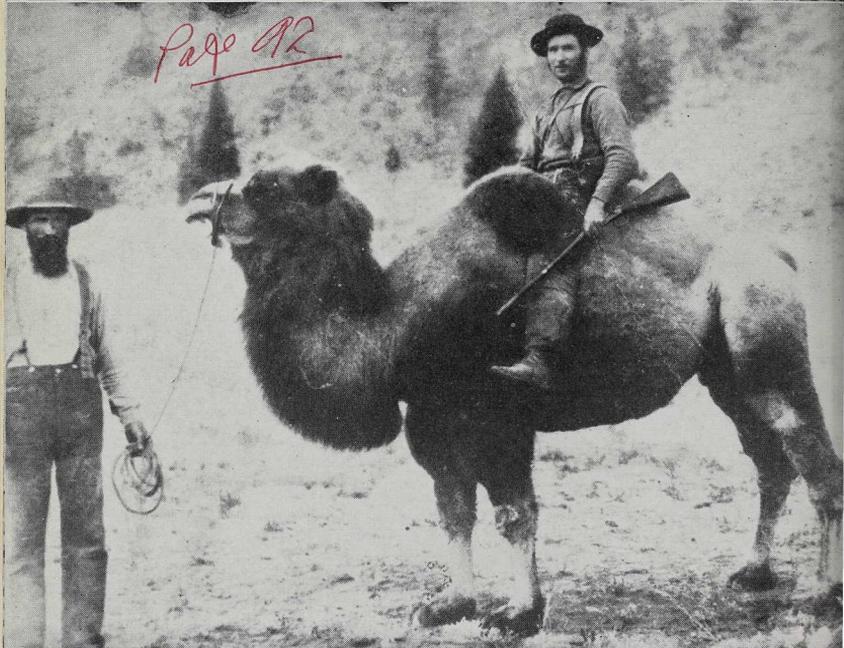
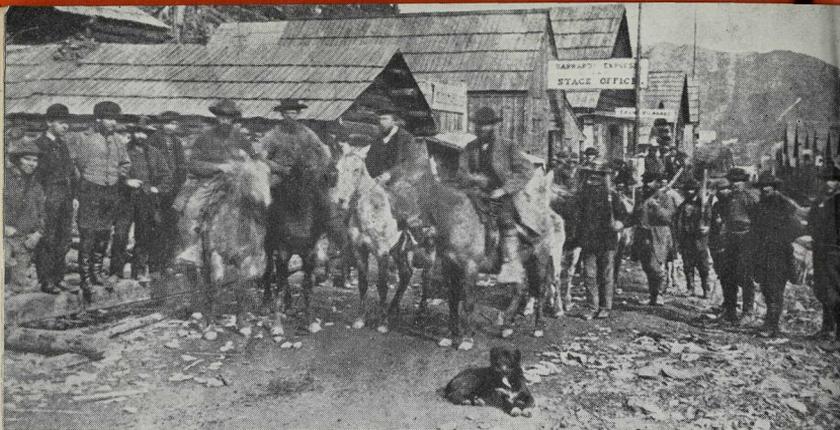
*Below:* THROUGH THIS CANYON EXPLORER, FUR-TRADER, MINER AND PACKER ALL LINED THEIR CANOES. IN THE FOREGROUND IS THE NEWLY CONSTRUCTED "FISH LADDER."



*Above:* THRESHING, DAWSON CREEK, B.C.

*Below:* SCENE FROM THREE BROTHERS MOUNTAIN, JUST OFF THE HOPE-PRINCETON HIGHWAY.

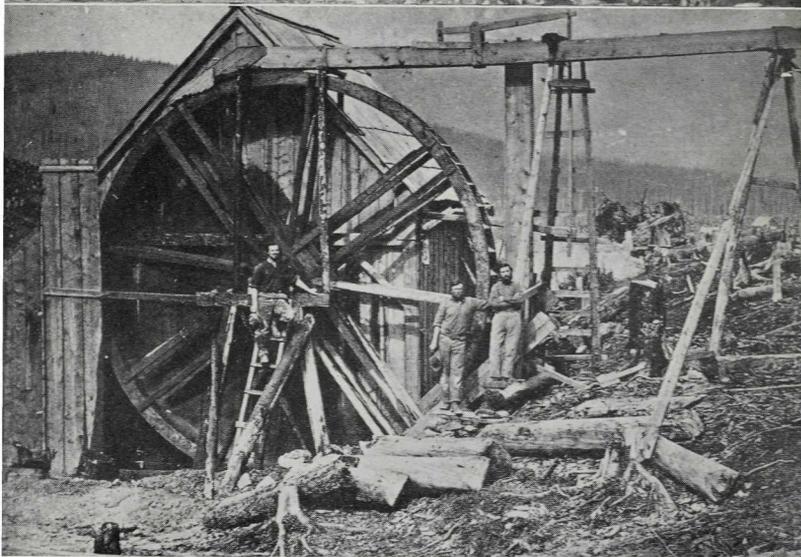
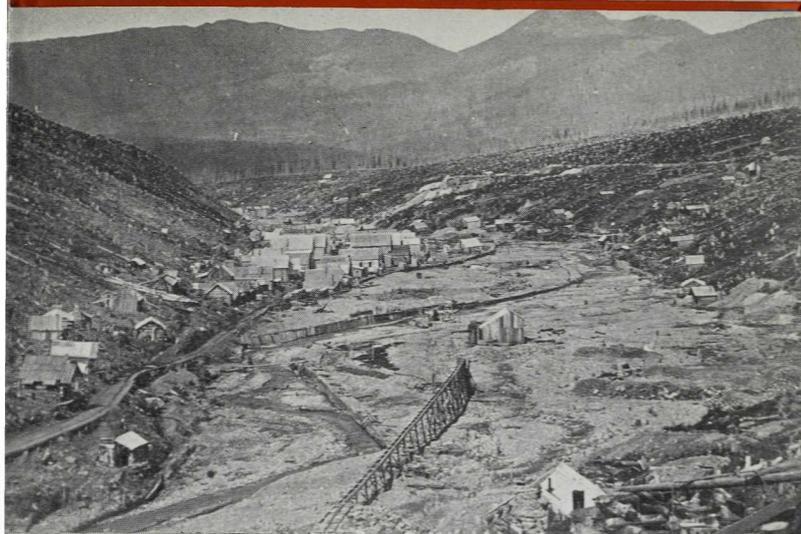
*(Courtesy B.C. Govt. Travel Bureau, Victoria)*



*Above:* THE GOLD ESCORT LEAVING BARKERVILLE IN THE EARLY SIXTIES.

*Below:* ONLY KNOWN PHOTOGRAPH OF THE CARIBOO CAMELS.

*(Courtesy Provincial Archives, Victoria, B.C.)*



*Above:* BARKERVILLE IN THE GOLD RUSH DAYS, BEFORE THE GREAT FIRE OF SEPTEMBER, 1868.

*Below:* DAVIS WHEEL AND FLUME, WILLIAMS CREEK.

*(Courtesy Provincial Archives, Victoria, B.C.)*



FELLING A 200-FOOT FIVE-HUNDRED-YEAR-OLD DOUGLAS FIR ON VANCOUVER ISLAND.

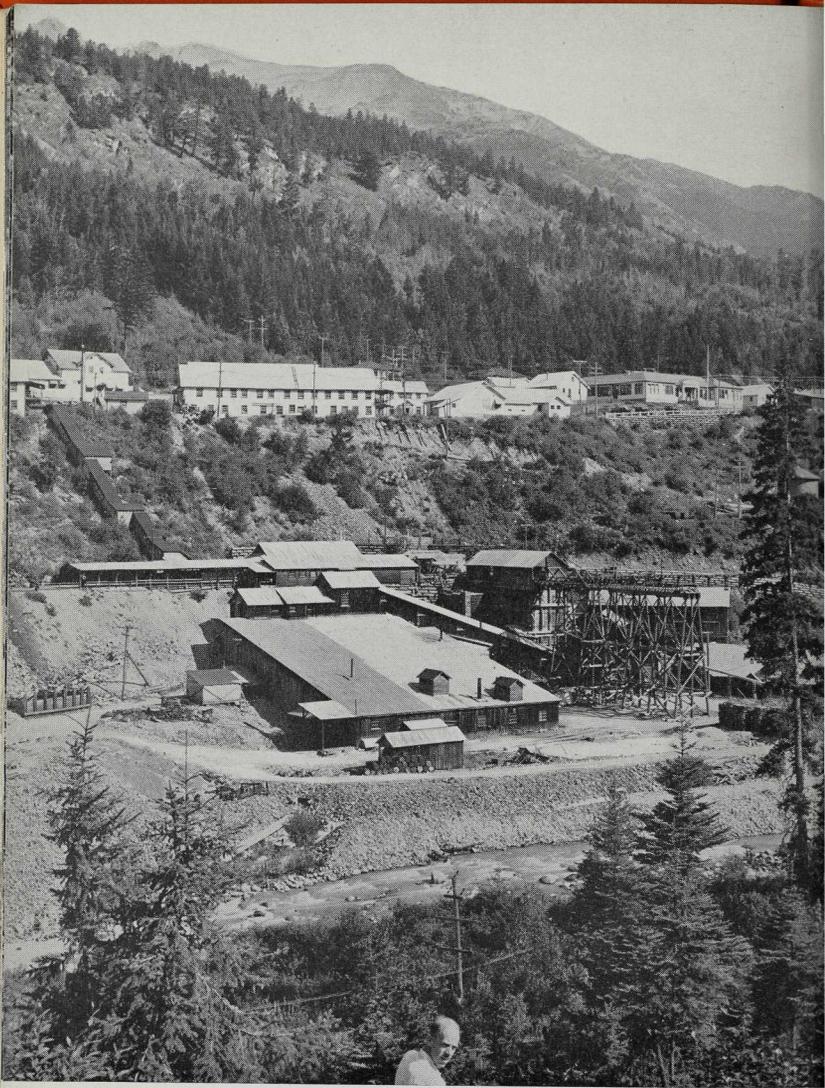
*(Courtesy B.C. Govt. Travel Bureau, Victoria)*



*Above:* PULP MILL, PORT ALBERNI, B.C.

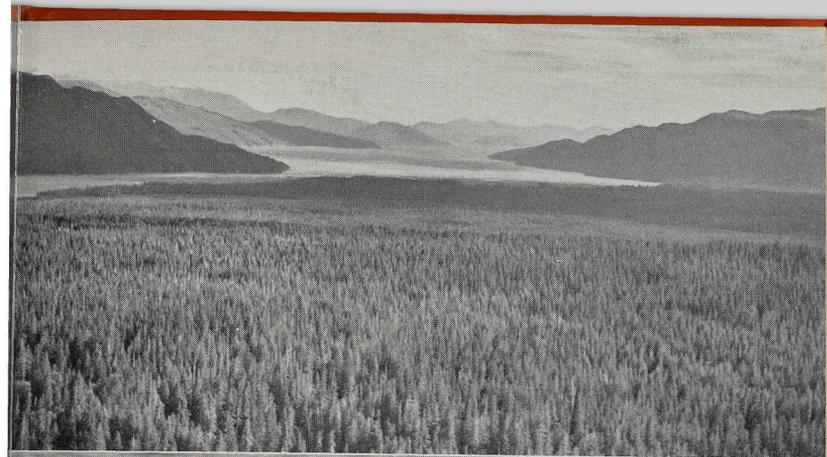
*Below:* HIGH SPEED BAND SAW.

*(Courtesy B.C. Govt. Travel Bureau, Victoria)*



BRALORNE MINE, B.C.

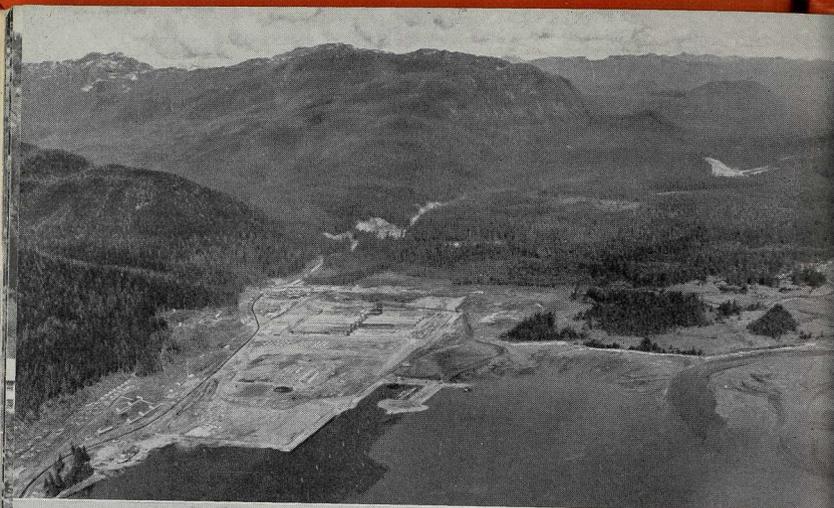
*(Courtesy B.C. Govt. Travel Bureau, Victoria)*



*Above:* AERIAL VIEW OF KITAMAT TOWNSITE BEFORE ANY CLEARING WAS STARTED.

*Below:* A COMMERCIAL TROLLER WITH SPRING SALMON, OFF VANCOUVER ISLAND.

*(Courtesy B.C. Govt. Travel Bureau, Victoria)*



*Above:* KITAMAT SMELTER AS IT APPEARS TODAY.

*Below:* VIEW OF KITAMAT SMELTER LOOKING EAST.

*(Courtesy Aluminum Company of Canada)*

hauled the furs back to the east again. At the Company's warehouses in Montreal goods for the various districts in the west were baled in large lots and taken by the great bateaux of the "heavy brigades" up the St. Lawrence and through the lakes to Fort William. There the bales were repacked in smaller lots, each one complete for each separate post, and then dispatched by the "light brigades" across the prairies. The goods for the New Caledonia posts travelled by way of Lake of the Woods and Lake Winnipeg to the Saskatchewan River, thence overland again to the Athabasca, eventually to reach Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabasca. From that point they were transported by the route which Alexander Mackenzie had discovered along the Peace and Parsnip and up the Pack River to Fort McLeod. Goods for Fort St. James and Fort Fraser were then carried from that point by way of a road which Fraser's men cut across country over a distance of some ninety miles through the roughest kind of terrain.

An alternative route was sometimes used for the shipment of bulkier supplies such as leather. Instead of taking the overland trail to the Athabasca, these shipments came all the way up the Saskatchewan, through Tete Jaune Pass to the headwaters of the Fraser itself, thence down that river and up the Nechako and Stuart to Fort St. James. As for the furs which were sent out from the posts the usual practice was to bundle them into packs of approximately ninety pounds. Each post despatched its peltries to the depot at Fort McLeod in the fall, and the brigade moved off down the Pack to meet the Fort William brigade at Fort Chipewyan. Early in the spring the boats would be off from that post carrying the trade supplies back to the western stations.

For the men who manned the posts and staffed the brigades, the life in New Caledonia was one of toil, hardship and danger. But it must have had attractions, too, for many of them became permanently attached to the country and to their Indian wives, and settled there for good. The company at one time tried to discourage its employees from forming these attachments with Indian women, and Simon Fraser on

one occasion took James McDougall severely to task for allowing one of the French Canadian boatmen, Bugne by name, to marry one of the native women at Fort McLeod. Perhaps Fraser was more concerned with maintaining harmony among the company workers than in any question of mixed marriages, for the woman in question had been taken away a few months before from another French Canadian, St. Pierre, on the express condition that "no other Frenchman would get her."

There were, occasionally, days of festivity to relieve the monotony of life at the posts—the arrival or departure of a brigade, the day when the first salmon was caught in the summer, and always, of course, New Year's Day. These were the occasions when all hands made merry. Of course, the company supplied the one thing really necessary for a "regale," large quantities of rum. One such affair is reported in full for posterity by Daniel Harmon, a pious and sober New England Yankee who served as John Stuart's lieutenant after Fraser left New Caledonia in 1809. Harmon arrived to take over his duties late in the fall of 1810; a few months later he was noting in his own prim way, his experience of a New Year's celebration. "This being the first day of another year, our people have passed it according to the custom of the Canadians, in drinking and fighting. Some of the principal Indians of this place desired us to allow them to remain at the fort, that they might see our people drunk. As soon as they began to be a little intoxicated, and to quarrel among themselves, the natives began to be apprehensive that something unpleasant might befall them also. They therefore hid themselves under beds and elsewhere, saying that they thought the white people had run mad, for they appeared not to know what they were about."

A year later at a similar celebration at Fort St. James, Harmon invited various chiefs to dine with him on New Year's Day. The chiefs accepted the invitation with pleasure, and among other things, consumed "a flagon or two of spirits." Much to Harmon's surprise, they behaved "with much decency," and "conversed rationally on the great difference

which there is between the manners and customs of civilized people, and those of the savages. They readily conceded that ours are superior to theirs." If Harmon had been capable of the facetious touch, one might suspect that his tongue was in his cheek while he was writing, but the Connecticut-born Yankee in New Caledonia was not a man for cynicism or light comment. He was, all his contemporaries agreed, a very good but a very grave man!

Far to the south in the Oregon country, conditions of trade were considerably easier. But there the Nor-Westerns were faced by competition, at first from the agents of the Astor Company and then from private traders coming overland from St. Joseph on the Missouri. In spite of this competition the Columbia Territory paid rich dividends. Fort George, the former Astoria, was the base for the trade, and supplies were shipped to that point by sea around the Horn from Montreal. This post was well-laid out, and well-equipped, with cultivated fields and pastures for cattle and sheep surrounding the buildings themselves.

From Fort George the trade goods went up the Columbia to the various posts which dotted the interior. Spokane House, on the river of that name, and Salish House were perhaps the most profitable of these, but for the historian of British Columbia the most important was that which had been established on the Thompson River where its two branches converged. At this point, Alexander Ross, an agent of Astor's Company, had set up a temporary post in the spring of 1812. Trade at "Cumcloups" (later Kamloops) was so profitable that it invited a permanent post, and an expedition was immediately sent to effect the establishment. Hardly had Astor's men commenced building when a party of Nor-Westerns under Joseph Laroque arrived on the spot, and they too set up in business. Until the next year the two posts carried on in competition with one another. With the disappearance of the American company, however, the Nor-Westerns were left in sole possession of the field.

Fort Kamloops had a secondary importance in the trade

of the interior. Now that the North West Company had an establishment on the Pacific, the long-delayed plan for supplying all its western posts by sea, could at last be carried into effect. In 1813 John Stuart devoted the summer to the exploration of a suitable route, and the one he discovered was regularly used after that time. Supplies for New Caledonia were brought by sea to Fort George, then packaged and shipped by canoe up the Columbia and Okanagan Rivers to Okanagan Lake. From the northern end of the lake the goods were carried by pack train overland to the Thompson, down to the post at Kamloops, across the plateau to Alexandria on the Fraser River, and then by canoe again up that river to Fort George, Fort St. James and the other posts.

The North West Company had by 1814 gained sole possession of a new region rich in furs and now relatively easy of access. It did not have long to enjoy the full fruits of its conquest, however. Across the Rockies in the great plain country the struggle which it had waged for years against the great Hudson's Bay Company was drawing to an end which was perhaps inevitable from the first. The long-drawn out conflict between the two great rivals was a grim battle; violence and terror were used by both parties and each one gave the other plenty of provocation for acts of retaliation and reprisal. Perhaps the worst feature was the fact that throughout the whole prairie area native populations were ruthlessly exploited and their lives debauched by the wholesale use of rum as the staple trade article.

The establishment by the Bay Company of a settlement on the Red River was the event which finally brought about the end of the North West Company. Under the Earl of Selkirk that settlement by 1815 was giving promise of becoming permanent. Now the colony was planted across the Nor-Westers' lines of communication to the west, and if it became a permanent settlement, would give a new validity to their competitors' claim to sovereignty in the whole region. In the opinion of many of the partners, then, it posed a very real threat to the continued existence of the Montreal firm.

Resentment against the settlers led to attacks against them, and those attacks finally culminated in an armed assault in 1816. Twenty-one settlers were killed in "the Massacre of Seven Oaks," and Governor Semple, the Bay's official representative, was himself fatally wounded in the fight.

To both companies the situation now was a dangerous one. The issues involved came to the courts of Canada, where the proceedings were the sensation of the day. Charges against the Nor-Westerns as individuals and as a company, totalled over one hundred and fifty, and included charges of murder, arson, and armed robbery. The Bay Company, and Selkirk personally, faced over thirty countercharges which ranged from larceny to resisting lawful arrest. In Britain, too, interest in the proceedings was very high, and the need for a parliamentary investigation of the whole matter was increasingly obvious. But such an inquiry would of necessity reveal the iniquities of both parties. Faced with a common danger, and aware at long last of the ruinous costs of the competition of the past few years, the two companies began negotiations to settle their differences. In 1821 the negotiations reached the inevitable conclusion, and the two firms agreed to join forces.

With the merger the old North West Company officially ceased to exist, and a romantic era had come to an end. In the whole history of Canada there is no more colourful page than that written by its men. And in the history of British Columbia they contributed even more than colour and drama, for such men as Fraser, Thompson, and John Stuart are the real pioneers of the province. So too were the less-well known, but perhaps equally important figures, men such as Daniel Harmon, or Joseph Laroque.

Harmon was a unique figure among the Nor-Westerns. He was a pious man, one who began each day with fifteen minutes upon his knees in prayer, and who set aside the first day of each month for prayer and meditation. He was far from being an ascetic, however, and very far from being a monastic, as witness his Indian wife and fourteen children. Apparently he was a missionary at heart, for he notes with pride in the

journal which he kept with meticulous care that he had persuaded many of his fellow employees of the company to "reform their ways." The truth probably was that it was easier to promise to reform than to argue with him. In his journal Harmon lists the five "resolves" which were to govern his conduct. One of them was a canny one — "to be in the company of the wicked as little as possible." Hardly an easy thing for a Nor-West fur trader! But if that were not possible he added a further "resolve" — "when among such wicked people, to endeavour to persuade them to forsake their evil courses." He must have been very popular with his companions! In one other way Daniel Harmon was unique. When he left the district in 1819, to return to Connecticut, Harmon took with him his Indian wife and their three surviving children, a procedure which he noted, with probably some self-satisfaction, was "different from that which has generally been pursued by the gentlemen of the North West Company."

Joseph Laroque was of a very different stamp. One of the most successful traders in the North West Company employ, Laroque was the man who put into use the supply route which John Stuart had discovered, that from Fort George at the mouth of the Columbia by way of the Thompson River into New Caledonia. He was a hard driver and a hard drinker, and one whose way with the Indian was to be like the Indian. It is pleasant to relate that Daniel Harmon spent a day with him at Fort McLeod and found that "from having been thoughtless and dissolute, he now appears to be the reverse of this. It is manifest that he has recently reflected much upon the vanity of this world, and on the important concerns of Eternity; and he now appears determined, by the aid of God's Holy Spirit, on a thorough reformation." It is sad to relate, however, that Laroque's reformation must have been far from "thorough," for he ended his career with the Company by being dismissed for habitual drunkenness.

Down in the Columbia department there were men just as loyal to the Company and just as dogged and determined

in their methods as the New Caledonia traders. Men such as David Stuart and Roderick MacKenzie continued the work of exploration and discovery, while the businessmen, the wintering partners, were consolidating the existing posts throughout the region. In their dealings with the Indians of the interior the Nor-Westers left the white man's mark, and their own names, in more ways than one. It was Duncan McDougall, for example, who first used the smallpox bottle ruse. With the Indians around Fort Astoria growing more hostile each day McDougall called the chiefs in to the fort and showed them a little bottle, tightly corked. "The whites are few," he said, "the Indians are as the sands on the shore. But this bottle has strong medicine. It contains the smallpox demon. If the red men are unfriendly, the bottle will be opened. If our traders are attacked or robbed, I will surely uncork the bottle." So impressed were the chiefs that Astoria was never again in danger. And so great was their respect for McDougall that he was offered the daughter of the greatest chief, "His One-Eyed Majesty King Comcomly," as a mistress. McDougall, it is reliably reported, accepted with appropriate thanks.

The most popular of the Nor-Westers with the Indians, however, was the famous Donald Mackenzie, who came out to take charge of the department after the Astorians sold out. He was the only white who was ever able to meet the Indians on equal terms in what was probably their favourite pastime of feasting. Now a feast among the Columbia River Indians was apparently a serious thing. The guests sat in a circle with plates (cedar slabs) between their legs. On the slabs the squaws piled heap after heap of stewed dog's flesh and roasted or boiled salmon, great clots of greasy bear stew, berries, cooked leaves and roots of the wapitoo, then back to the meats again. When the stomach finally refused more it was the part of etiquette to step out of the lodge and by inserting two fingers down one's throat, to make room for still another helping. At this game Mackenzie won the admiration of all. He paid the price, however. When he left the Columbia to

take charge of the Red River district he carried away with him 312 pounds of solid, solid flesh.

During the decade and a half of its supremacy in the far-west region, the North West Company had accomplished a great deal towards establishing a permanent trade and a permanent occupancy in the region. Perhaps not the least of its achievements was its last one. When the new corporation was formed it took the name of the older Hudson's Bay Company, but it was, to use the terms of modern advertising, vitalized and energized by a blood-transfusion of North West personnel.

The new Company was supreme in a vast territory stretching all the way from Hudson's Bay to the Pacific. On the north its domain was bounded by the Arctic Ocean, on the south by a yet undeveloped region whose boundaries and whose sovereignty were yet to be determined. In the meantime a new Royal Licence issued to the Company gave it the exclusive right to trade in that area for a period of twenty-one years. The Company rights then, were neither permanent nor guaranteed, but at least they offered a possibility of great profits if someone energetic enough and bold enough could be found to repair the damages done by the events of 1816 to 1821, and to organize and prosecute a new and vigorous policy for the far west. Such a man was George Simpson, who now took the job of Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company's Territories. Under his direction what is now British Columbia became a department of the Great Company; its development for the next three decades was perhaps a little less colourful than in the days of the Nor-Westers, but certainly more significant.

E I G H T

*Adventurers of England*

BY THE TERMS of their first charter, granted by Charles II in 1670, the "Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay" had been given an exclusive licence to the "trade and commerce of all those seas, straits, bays, rivers, lakes, creeks and sounds . . . that lie within the entrance of the straits, commonly called Hudson's Straits, together with all the lands, countries and territories upon the coast and confines of the seas, straits, bays, lakes, rivers, creeks and sounds aforesaid, which are not now actually possessed by any of our subjects, or by the subjects of any other Christian Prince or State." Quite a sweep of territory! The licence was not valid, however, either in the Arctic drainage basin, or in the Pacific northwest. As a result, in 1821 a new Royal Licence was issued to give effect to the agreement which the Company had just made with its old rival, the North West Company. By the terms of the new grant, the exclusive right to trade in the territory of Rupert's Land was extended to cover all that land, as far as the Pacific, which was not already part of a British province, or part of the United States.

The year 1821 was a year of real crisis for the Company. The decade of cut-throat competition between the Bay Company and the Nor-Westers had depleted the resources, decimated the personnel, and lowered the prestige of both. The Indians upon whom the forts depended for most of their annual get of furs, had either been debauched by the

indiscriminate use of rum as the staple of trade, or turned hostile by the ruthless exploitation made necessary by the shrinking profits of both firms. Even in the far western districts of New Caledonia and the Columbia, where there had been no competition except from straggling parties of American traders, the situation was a difficult one. And to make things even worse, many of the old Nor-Westerns already on the ground viewed the amalgamation with distrust, and either refused to continue to serve the new company, or did so with very bad grace.

Fortunately for the Hudson's Bay Company the man who now assumed direction of its work in America was singularly well-fitted to handle these problems. In fact under George Simpson, the new governor, the affairs of the company passed in two decades from a state of crisis to a condition of prosperity greater than any which the company had yet known. Among Simpson's other abilities was that of almost unerring judgment in the selection of officers to act as chief factors over the districts which made up his vast domain. He was fortunate, too, in inheriting the services of some men in the western regions at least, whose skill in management and vigour in prosecution of his plans, helped enormously to make the western departments the most profitable of all.

In charge of the New Caledonia district, for example, was John Stuart, and when he left in 1824 he was replaced by a man almost equally useful, William Connolly. Under them were such shrewd traders as John Tod at McLeod Lake, Peter Warren Dease at Fraser Lake, and William McGillivray at Fort George. Some of these men had several claims to fame. William Connolly, for example, is perhaps best known for the fact that he was the cause of a famous and important legal decision. While in the service of the North West Company as clerk he had "taken to wife" a Cree woman named Susan, and by her had several children. After becoming a Chief Trader in the Hudson's Bay Company at the time of amalgamation, Connolly married again in Montreal, this time in a formal church ceremony and to a

white woman of some social standing. After his death the children of the first marriage brought suit to share in his estate, and the probate court ruled that the earlier marriage, no matter how unorthodox in form, was perfectly sound at law.

Peter Warren Dease was another whose fame rests on more than merely his shrewdness as a fur trader. After serving successively (and successfully) with first the XY Company and then the North West Company, Dease became a Chief Trader with the Bay. In 1824 he joined an Arctic Expedition which the company sent out to map the northern reaches; from that time on till 1838 Dease was involved in a series of explorations which took him as far north as the Arctic coast, and which won for him a citation from Queen Victoria herself, and a pension of £100 per annum.

Directing operations in the region which is now Oregon and Washington, was the famous Doctor John McLoughlin, the "White Haired Eagle" of Indian legends. Possibly no other individual played an equal role in the development of the Pacific northwest. Both in appearance and in action McLoughlin was a commanding figure. Standing some six feet four inches in height, with a body of magnificent proportions, topped with a handsome head and a leonine shock of snow-white hair, "Doctor John" was for a quarter of a century the best-known figure in the far west. To aid him in implementing the ambitious plans which he conceived for the vast area over which he was master, McLoughlin could count upon the services of a number of able lieutenants. Of them, Samuel Black, later to be killed by Indians, John Work, a clerk whose journals are a mine of information about the fur trade, Simon McGillivray, Peter Skene Ogden, and James Douglas, were all men whose names are linked with the early history of British North America.

"Doctor John" (the title was real, for McLoughlin had been licensed in Quebec in 1803 "to practice in Surgery and Pharmacy, or as an Apothecary") arrived at Fort George to assume his duties as Chief Factor in 1824. He might, as a

matter of fact, be called Simpson's first new appointment, since he had been dispatched from York Factory only twenty days before the governor himself left on his tour of inspection of the Columbia department. Some of the Doctor's later energy may be attributed to a very salutary experience on the way. Although McLoughlin had twenty days start on his superior, Simpson caught up to him at Lac La Biche in what is now northern Alberta. We may be sure that the peppery little Governor had things to say to his lieutenant, for he noted in his journal that it was almost "7 o'clock a.m." when he "came up with the Dr. before his people had left their Encampment, although we had by that early hour come from his breakfasting place of the preceding day." Hmmp!

Neither Simpson nor McLoughlin was pleased at what they found in the Columbia department. Said Simpson, "Everything appears to me on the Columbia on too extended a scale, except the Trade!" Soon after the dynamic governor was off to the east again, but McLoughlin remained behind to make changes — important changes. For one thing, the location of Fort George, the old Astoria, seemed quite unsatisfactory. In order to reach the post, ships still had to cross the great sand bar at the river's mouth. Since they had to face that obstacle anyway, they might just as well then sail on up the river to a spot much closer to the trade itself. Then too, a location on the north side of the Columbia was infinitely preferable in view of the possibility that the boundary between British and American sovereignty might very well be the Columbia River itself!

Both Simpson and McLoughlin had already agreed upon the site for the new establishment, a spot just above the place where the Willamette joins the Columbia, the place where the City of Vancouver, Washington, now stands. Simpson, in fact, stopped long enough at the new post to "Baptize it by breaking a Bottle of Rum on the Flag Staff." Neither Simpson nor McLoughlin in the beginning intended this to be the main depot. The headquarters they thought, should be located on the Fraser, and in fact a party was

already examining that river to find a site. But the river which Fraser and Stuart had explored was never meant to play the role of highway and Simpson very soon found that out when he made a canoe trip from Kamloops down to the sea in 1828!

Within a very few years after the transfer, Fort Vancouver, as it was named, had become in fact the centre of the Columbia trade. Substantial buildings were erected for the storage of furs and trade goods, and to house a growing personnel. The interests of the place were many and varied. By 1837, some three hundred acres of land were under cultivation by company workers, or were providing pasture for herds of company sheep or cattle. Two sawmills, a flour mill, and large new orchard lots, all testified to the growing diversity of company activity under McLoughlin's supervision. The traffic in furs, of course, still was the main business of the place, and for years skins to the value of approximately half a million dollars, the yield of both Columbia and New Caledonia, were annually shipped from the fort.

From Vancouver as a base, and under Doctor McLoughlin's initiative and guidance, the Company's business during the next two decades underwent a remarkable expansion. New forts were established along the Columbia and on many of its tributaries, while at Alexandria on the Fraser and on Babine Lake, both in the New Caledonia district, more vigorous methods helped to revive the flagging returns from the northern area. It was in the coastal regions that the most remarkable expansion took place. In far northern waters, at the mouth of the Nass River, Fort Simpson was built; two years later it was moved south to the Tsimpsean Peninsula, where the establishment soon became one of the most important and profitable in the Hudson's Bay Company chain. Fort McLoughlin was built in 1834 on Millbank Sound, and six years later the company extended its operations to Taku Inlet in what is now Alaska, by building Fort Durham at that point. Far to the south at San Francisco Bay, the post

of Yerba Buena was soon after set up, while a company establishment was erected on the island of Hawaii to supply foodstuffs and labourers for the American operations.

Although the traffic in furs remained the core of all activities, enterprise on other lines was already paying a handsome profit to the shareholders. Agricultural operations at Fort Vancouver and at Fort Nisqually on Puget Sound were designed not only to supply the needs of company personnel, but to provide foodstuffs for trade with the Russian establishments in the far north as well. By 1849 the Company was supplying such goods to Sitka in the annual value of some £10,000. That year saw the arrival at Fort Victoria on Vancouver Island of a body of English miners, brought out by the company to dig the abundant coal resources which had been discovered near Nanaimo. Large quantities of timber were being cut, not only for the use of the Company posts in the territory, but for export as well. In the Columbia region, and particularly in the neighbourhood of Fort Vancouver, the Company was carrying on a fairly large retail business in supplying the needs of the settlers who began to pour into the Oregon territory during the decade of the forties. Perhaps this latter was a business which the Company was reluctant to see grow; at any rate many of the new settlers objected strenuously to the prices which they had to pay for goods at the Company stores.

It was this question of the relationship between Company and immigrant settlers in the Oregon territory which was soon to be the all-important issue for the Bay officers. The overwhelming majority of these new settlers were American citizens, part of the stream of pioneers which began in the late thirties to pour over the old Oregon trail from Independence, Missouri, into the lush valleys of the Willamette and lower Columbia Rivers. The coming of the settlers and the growing bad feeling between them and the Hudson's Bay Company officials, made at last necessary a settlement of the boundary question.

By the convention of 1818 the boundary in the west between British North America and the United States had been fixed as the forty-ninth parallel of latitude. This parallel was to be followed from the Lake of the Woods all the way to the summit of the Rocky Mountains; beyond that point, settlement and definition were to be delayed for a period of ten years. At that time both Russia and Spain might be said to have claims on the coast which were almost as valid as those of either Britain or the United States. In 1819, however, a convention between Spain and the United States fixed the boundary between their possessions as the forty-second parallel, with the United States officially falling heir to whatever claims the Spanish crown might have to the coast north of that line. In 1824 Russia concluded a convention with the United States and in 1825 a similar treaty with Great Britain, by the terms of which the southern limit of the Czar's sovereignty was fixed as the parallel of  $54^{\circ} 40'$  N. Thus for all practical purposes the territory left in dispute was that lying west of the Rockies, south of  $54^{\circ} 40'$  and north of  $42^{\circ}$ . This was in effect, the whole area of the Bay's operations.

Of the conflict between Britain and the United States for title to the Oregon territory, enough now has been written to indicate that, as is usual in such disputes, there was considerable evidence to support both claims. The British could point to the work of Cook and Vancouver, while the Americans could counter with the names of Perez and Martinez—Spaniards whose rights they had bought and paid for. Mackenzie's exploration of the interior in 1793 was a source of strength to the British as far as the northern area was concerned; the Lewis and Clarke expedition gave the American case somewhat similar strength in the south. Obviously the nation whose people first occupied the disputed area and made permanent settlements in it, would be the nation with the strongest position. There were some in the American Congress who saw this clearly, and in 1820 and again in 1823 efforts had been made to pass legislation in that body provid-

ing for the occupation of the disputed zone by American agencies. Their efforts, however, failed to secure official government action.

In 1824 negotiations began again between the two governments. The British proposed a line of demarcation along the forty-ninth parallel from the Rockies to the Columbia, and thence along that river south and west to the sea. This the American negotiators were unwilling to accept, and countered with the proposal that the forty-ninth parallel be followed all the way from mountains to sea. Negotiations re-opened in 1826 with the American representative, Andrew Gallatin, specifically instructed to agree to no other line than that at 49° of latitude. Neither Gallatin nor his British opponents were willing to compromise on their respective claims, so it was agreed to prolong the stalemate. In 1827 the provisions of the convention of 1818 were simply renewed, with the claims of both parties in no way affected.

During the next decade the flood of emigration from the eastern United States into Oregon began to swell. Bills were proposed in Congress to sponsor and to subsidize such emigration. They failed to secure official passage, but they did serve to popularize the attractions of the fabulous Oregon country. As a result, by 1841 there were enough American settlers in the region to warrant a Presidential appropriation of funds for a line of military posts along the road to Oregon. In 1842 Senator Linn, speaking in support of one of many resolutions in which he demanded occupation of the territory, claimed that almost 7,000 American citizens were located in it. The number may have been exaggerated at the time, but not for long, for the middle forties saw a rush to the new lands. In 1845 alone, for example, more than 3,000 settlers entered the Columbia district. In the meantime the Hudson's Bay Company, the guardian of British interests in the territory, apart from locating a few of its retiring servants on lands near its post at Vancouver, made little or no effort to substantiate British claims to sovereignty by any establishment of permanent settlements.

During the summer of 1844 negotiations on the Oregon boundary question were again re-opened. Once again the British offered to settle for the line of the forty-ninth parallel from the mountains to the Columbia and thence by that river to the sea-coast. Once again the American negotiator, Secretary of State John C. Calhoun, rejected the proposal. In the meantime American public opinion had been aroused to support of the demand for "all of Oregon," and the slogan of "Fifty-four forty or fight" became a popular catchword.

In March of 1845 a new president James K. Polk, took office, committed by his party's platform to securing "clear and unquestionable" title to Oregon. An offer of settlement on a basis of the forty-ninth parallel was made through his new Secretary of State, James Buchanan; when this offer was rejected by the British minister in Washington, President Polk called on Congress to consider "proper measures to protect American citizens in Oregon." In accordance with his request, the American government now gave official notice of the abrogation of the treaty of 1827. Since no agreement now existed, and since preparations were being made in Washington to assume sovereignty in Oregon by organizing a territorial government there, it was up to the British government to decide upon their policy. Reluctantly that government now suggested a treaty fixing the forty-ninth parallel as the boundary all the way from the Rockies to the sea-coast. In June of that year, and no doubt with a great deal of satisfied laughter, the American Senate recommended its acceptance. By the terms of the treaty which was signed several days later, sovereignty over all mainland regions south of 49°N. was confirmed in the government of the United States.

One of the by-products of the treaty was the new set of rather horrifying complications which faced the Hudson's Bay Company. Its depot on the Columbia, and most of its western posts, were located on what was now indisputably American soil, and Company business was as a result subject to American law. Horrors! Of course, the company itself was largely to blame for its own difficulties, for regardless of the

legal rights or wrongs of the case, the American claim rested mainly upon the actual fact that settlement in the disputed region was almost entirely American. By its very nature the English company had been reluctant to encourage the entrance into the territory of would-be settlers, British or otherwise, and by its failure to do just this it had destroyed the effectiveness of its own case.

Company officials had long since been aware of the possibility of a boundary settlement which might leave their establishments under a foreign power, and as early as 1824, when the site at Fort Vancouver had been considered as a base, an exploratory expedition had been despatched to the north to examine possible locations for a new establishment on the Fraser. Governor Simpson was keenly interested, and even before he had reached the coast had broached the possibility of a new organization and a new base. "I imparted to Mr. McMillan (Chief Trader James McMillan, who was travelling with the governor) my views in regard to extending the trade to the Northwest . . . and pointed out to him the importance of having an establishment at the mouth of Fraser's River." Apparently McMillan did not take the hint. At any rate, in a second discussion the governor commented upon the fact that "our ignorance" of the resources and possibilities of the Fraser region was "a disgrace to the whole concern," and intimated that rather than let such a state of affairs continue he would take upon himself the task of exploration. "This had the desired effect and Mr. McMillan immediately offered his services on this dangerous and unpleasant mission. . . ."

In November of 1824 McMillan set out from Fort George for the Fraser. In his party were Tom Mackay, the son of Alexander Mackenzie's lieutenant, and clerks John Work and François Annance. One of the guides was an amiable French Canadian, Jean Baptiste Proveau (or Prevost), who brought to the work knowledge of the new region which he had acquired as a boatman in the party which Simon Fraser himself had led down the river fourteen years before. Following

the Oregon coast the party reached the mouth of the Chehalis River, then ascended that stream and crossed overland to Puget Sound. Then they crossed that great inland sea to the present Semiahmoo Bay, through which the international boundary now runs, and proceeded up the Nikomekl River to its headwaters. From that point a well marked trail ran across the prairie land near what is now the town of Langley—a region which was at that time of the year almost knee-deep in mud after the fall rains—and then by way of the winding Salmon River to the Fraser itself. Two days were spent in examination of the regions up-river from this spot, then McMillan turned back and made his way to Fort George by way of the main stream of the Fraser, and thence down the coast. As a result of his report, instructions came from London in February of 1826. "We wish Fraser's River to be established next season if possible. . . . From the central situation of Fraser's River, we think it probable that it will be found to be the proper place for the principal depot, but not until we have passed at least one winter there . . . and ascertained whether the navigation of the River is favourable to the Plan of making it the principal communication with the Interior. . . ." Simpson himself thought that the mere fact that Fraser and Stuart had come downstream and then "returned safe altho total strangers to the river," indicated its perfect safety, and noted that "from the natives . . . we know that . . . it is a fine, large, deep, navigable River." Even sour old Simon Fraser would have laughed at this! Fraser, of course, was now out of reach, but John Stuart soon disabused Simpson when he met the Governor in Montreal the next spring.

In June of 1827 McMillan led another expedition to the Fraser, this time with instructions to establish a post on its lower reaches. The entrance to the river was made on board the Company ship, the *Cadboro*, for the object was to transport not only men but the equipment necessary to effect a permanent establishment. On the thirtieth of July the *Cadboro* anchored at a spot just below the mouth of the

Salmon River, and next day building began. Thus was born the first post in what is now southern British Columbia, and the first designed to use the Fraser as a highway of communications. A month later the buildings were finished and bastions erected to form the four corners of a palisade. Within a few more days the fencing was completed, and the new Fort Langley opened its doors to trade.

The new post was, of course, quite unsuitable as a base of operations for the Company in the west. If, after talking to John Stuart, Governor Simpson still had any lingering ideas about using the Fraser as a brigade route to the north, he very quickly lost them when in 1828 he himself came by canoe from Fort Kamloops down to Langley. That would certainly convince him! The river did provide an avenue of communication with the interior, but it was one which could be used only with the greatest of difficulty. To the builders of Fort Langley this was dramatically emphasized when they received their first mail. In October two Indians arrived at the fort bearing a letter from the trader at Kamloops to the post at Fort Vancouver. The letter had come the river route, and it was dated just one year before! There were more than natural difficulties, too. Down river hostile Indians were a menace to peaceful trade, and the shifting sands and dangerous shoal waters at the river mouth made entrance to the main channel at all times a dangerous business.

Fort Langley was not to be abandoned, however. In fact, the old Fort was very early being denounced as "unsatisfactory" by its energetic commander, James Yale, but only because its space and facilities were inadequate. As a result of his appeals a brand new establishment was built a few miles upstream in 1839. When the new post burnt down in April of 1840, "Little Yale" was visited by James Douglas, his superior, with an offer of aid. The tough little clerk told Douglas, "All I want from you is that you give me six axes and then be off!" Within three weeks the fort was functioning again. By that time many other problems had been solved. For example, in 1837 a decisive clash with the Indians from

down river finally ended the constant danger from that direction. Several thousand Yucultas, the coast Indians, attempted to storm the fort, but the grape shot from its guns and the knives of the white traders' Kwantlin allies wrought terrible carnage in the ranks of the attackers. Never again were the long war canoes seen coming up the river.

By 1841 the returns from Fort Langley in terms of furs had begun to dwindle, but significantly enough, its importance to the company scheme of operations had not diminished, for the fish and the farm products which it was beginning to supply, under the capable direction of "Little Yale," were of a value almost equal to that of its earlier fur returns. The two great resources of the lower Fraser Valley, its fisheries and its agriculture, were thus very early being exploited. In fact, the decision in 1839 to move the fort upstream was in part at least due to the desire to put it in the centre of the new farm lands now being developed intensively. Henceforth Fort Langley was to play a rather special role in the Company operations, even though it was a relatively minor one. The important function of depot and supply base was now to be taken over by the new establishment at Victoria on Vancouver's Island.

N I N E

*Outpost of Empire*

The one problem which bedeviled the Bay men in their operations in the Columbia department was the troublesome problem of sovereignty in the area. By 1842 it was becoming disturbingly clear that the British government might be ready to accept the forty-ninth parallel as the southern limit of British territory. In such a case it was clearly necessary for the Hudson's Bay Company to have an alternative to Fort Vancouver, to have available another base of operations, and another port of entry for its supply ships. Fort Langley would not do, since it lay far up the Fraser, and at the far end of a very tricky bit of navigation for ocean-going vessels. The problem was to find the right combination of accessibility from the sea plus open arable ground suitable for agriculture. Now in southern British Columbia that is a rather difficult combination to find, and the Company did not have much choice of sites. However, extensive exploration carried out by Captain William McNeill in the Company's new trading vessel, the *Cadboro*, had suggested that the southernmost shore of Vancouver Island might be suitable, and apparently it was decided during the thirties to build there. There were delays in acting upon the report but in August of 1841 Governor Simpson himself arrived to look over the situation of the Columbia department. Very soon after there was action!

Early in 1842 a party left Fort Vancouver, under the command of James Douglas, and proceeded to survey the island coast from Sooke Harbour to the site of the present

Victoria. In his report Douglas noted that he had chosen "the Port of Camosack" as the site for the new establishment. "As a harbour it is equally safe and accessible, and abundance of timber grows near it for Home consumption and exportation." He remarked, too, upon the fact that while other harbours were just as safe, they were generally "surrounded by Rocks and Forests, which it will require Ages to level and adapt extensively to the Purposes of Agriculture, whereas at Camosack there is a Range of Plains nearly Six Miles Square, containing a great Extent of Valuable Tillage and Pasture Land equally well-adapted for the Plough or for feeding Stock." The land was "a dark vegetable Mould . . . which produces the rankest Growth of native Plants that I have seen in America." Victoria had now claimed her first lover. Writing to a friend James Douglas confided that he was "enamoured" of the place. It "appears a perfect Eden in the midst of the dreary wilderness . . . one might be pardoned for supposing it had dropped from the clouds into its present location! . . . And not a musquitoe, that plague of plagues, did we feel!" Ah, Victoria!

Small wonder that Governor Simpson referred to the new site as being "peculiarly eligible for a depot in every respect," and urged immediate action. On March 10, 1843, a working party left Fort Vancouver; by the sixteenth of the month everybody in the party, Douglas included, was busily engaged squaring timbers for the walls and palisades of the new fort. When curious Indians came to observe the proceedings they too were invited to work, at the munificent rate of one blanket for every forty timbers delivered to the site. Douglas was never one to spoil the Indians by too much kindness! While work was in progress at Camosack, (or Camosun, as the harbour was more usually called) Douglas himself embarked on the *Beaver*, the company's steamer, and sailed northward. His purpose was to supervise the dismantling of Fort Durham at Taku Inlet, and Fort McLoughlin on Millbank Sound, since Governor Simpson had ordered these posts to be closed and the men, equipment, and supplies to be transferred to

the new site. The acquisition of both men and stores enabled work to be pressed forward, and removed for a time at least the fear of attack from the large numbers of Indians who now encamped about the place, for a working party of over fifty men was now established at the site.

By the end of August the fort was ready for occupation. An area roughly one hundred yards square, situated just south of the causeway which now faces the Empress Hotel, and just across from the Parliament buildings of today, was surrounded by a stout palisade. Inside the stockade were living quarters, offices and storehouses, all built of squared timbers. Chief Trader Charles Ross was the first in charge of the new establishment, now officially christened Fort Victoria, but his tenure was short, for he died five months later. His successor was Roderick Finlayson, a shrewd and efficient Scots trader under whose direction Victoria very quickly became a profitable post.

In his journal Finlayson gave a graphic picture of the troubles and dangers of the early fur-trader in this territory. The Indians continued to offer a problem to the white traders, mainly because they found it difficult to understand the white man's reverence for property rights — particularly the Company's property rights! On one occasion, for example the natives raided the herds of cattle and horses grazing outside the palisade and carried off the best of the animals to provide the meat for one of their periodic "potlaches." Finlayson called together the chiefs of the several tribes camped about the post and demanded from them compensation for the Company's loss. When they refused, trade was immediately suspended and the gates of the fort closed to all natives.

The Indian reply was an attack upon the post, and for several uncomfortable hours the whites inside the stockade were subjected to continuous fire from the guns of the Indian braves. Finally Finlayson decided upon a show of strength. A message was sent by an Indian hostage who had been caught inside when the shooting started. The natives were told to clear all living creatures out of the nearest of their lodges,

one erected just a short distance from the walls. When the implied warning failed, Finlayson had the cannon in one of the bastions loaded with grape. A moment later it boomed once, and the selected lodge was blown to bits! Minutes later a deputation of chiefs appeared to treat for peace! Finlayson was ready to give them still another evidence of the efficacy of his weapons. At his suggestion an old canoe was anchored off shore from the fort and once again the fort gunner showed his skill by putting a cannon-ball through it on his first attempt. With considerable satisfaction Finlayson was able to report that before evening furs to the full value of the stolen animals had been delivered at the fort gate, and the chiefs had entered upon a solemn promise never again to tamper with Company property.

Fort Victoria was intended from the first as more than simply another trading post. In spite of Doctor McLoughlin's opposition, for he was understandably attached to Fort Vancouver and the valley where he had now spent two decades of his life, more and more of the functions of Fort Vancouver began to pass to Victoria. Thus in 1845 Company vessels began to make Victoria their first point of call after reaching the coast, and Victoria as a result became the distributing centre for all coastal trade. British warships appeared often on the coast during the long diplomatic struggle over the Oregon boundary and for them the harbour of Esquimalt was their base and the Company post at Victoria their depot of supply. Whaling ships, too, began to call at Victoria on their way to and from the grounds far to the north, so that one more opportunity for profitable trade was opened to the energetic officers at Victoria. By 1849 the site which a decade before had been wilderness was already a thriving little settlement. As a matter of fact, by that time the stockaded area was much too small to enclose even all the Company's buildings. Governor Douglas, for example, was building an official residence some distance away from the fort, on a site very close to the location of today's imposing Parliament buildings.

Even by that time the old stockade, with its bastions, and its guns, was an anachronism. When the gold rush came and Victoria became a city, the fortifications were the object of much laughter; the guns were only good to fire a salute, and even then the government faced a claim for damage because the reverberations broke windows in the business premises between the fort and the water front. In December of 1860 the old fort finally was removed. The *Colonist* wept crocodile tears as the bastion was dismantled and its planks were chopped up for firewood. "Alas, poor bastion," lamented the editor. "Thy removal should be enough to break the heart of every Hudson's Bay man in the country!"

Long before this, the Company had decided to transfer its headquarters from Fort Vancouver to the new Victoria. Such a change was inevitable in view of the settlement which had been reached on the boundary questions. Even more important, for the historian at least, was the fact that in 1849, the same year in which this transfer was effected, two other vastly important decisions were made by the British government with regard to its far western possession. Vancouver Island itself was granted to the Hudson's Bay Company, under conditions which we shall examine, and a Colony of Vancouver Island was thereupon established. The history of British Columbia, both as an imperial colony and as part of a Canada-to-be, had at long last officially begun.

As soon as the Oregon Treaty had formally confirmed American sovereignty in the disputed territory south of 49° N. the officials of the Hudson's Bay Company in England began to take steps to repair the damage which that treaty had done them. As we have seen, headquarters for their far western operations were transferred to Victoria. To make sure that there would be no repetition of the trouble with settlers like those who had poured into Oregon, the Company now sought to fortify its position in the new location by obtaining a legal title to the land of Vancouver Island. With this in view, the Governor of the Company in London, Sir John Pelley, began negotiations with the home government. The

Colonial Secretary, Earl Grey, was apparently ready to listen to his suggestion, but insisted that any formal grant of the island to the company must be accompanied by an explicit obligation on its part to promote colonization of the land in question. Thus, the Royal Grant of January, 1849, gave to the Company the right to "to have, hold and possess and enjoy the said territory of Vancouver's Island," but upon the express condition that the Governor and Company "shall establish upon the said island a settlement or settlements or resident colonists — and shall dispose of the land there as may be necessary for the purpose of colonization . . . at a reasonable price . . ." The questions whether the company ever fulfilled the spirit of this condition, and whether the home authorities were ever justified in revoking the grant, have been good for an argument among historians ever since. No matter what good things may be said about company administration of the island, one fact is fairly clear; that to the Company officers promoting a colony was at best a secondary goal. Indeed, it would be at least unlikely that the interests of settlers should ever be placed ahead of those of the company.

Even when the grant was being approved, there was opposition to it, both in and out of Parliament. William Ewart Gladstone, for example, criticized the policy of confirming special privileges in the island to a private company, while another critic had "no hesitation in saying that the grant would be wholly and totally inapplicable to the nursing of a young Colony, with the hopes of ever bringing it to Maturity." The same man also warned that while climate, soil, and topography all made the island most desirable from the point of view of the colonist, the existence of the Hudson's Bay monopoly would serve simply to place the colonists "wholly at the mercy" of the monopolists. And that, he concluded, was the same as the death sentence on settlement.

Perhaps to meet some of these objections, the Royal Grant was so drafted as to require the Company to set up a government for the new colony. In 1849 Richard Blanshard, a man who had already had some experience with colonial admini-

stration during his residence in the West Indies, was commissioned as Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Vancouver Island. The Company, through Sir John Pelley, had pressed for the appointment of James Douglas, the chief factor at Victoria, but in this case at least, its desires were not met.

It was only to be expected that Blanshard would encounter difficulties in his new post. Arriving at Victoria in March of 1850, the new Governor settled down to discharge his office. He found, however, that his position had few duties and even fewer facilities. He had no seat of government, since the Company had neglected to provide him with an office. Indeed, he found that he had not even been provided with living quarters, and for several weeks Blanshard had to remain aboard the Royal Navy frigate which had brought him to the colony. He received no salary from the home office and there was not much chance that the fewer than thirty independent settlers could provide much in the way of tax revenue. The sale of lands to new settlers might have provided income for the new governor, but those lands were the property of the Company, and even when lots were sold its officers insisted that they control the purchase funds. To maintain his own establishment the governor had to use his personal funds, and the Company helped him not at all. Indeed, even for his supplies he was charged what was called the "cash price" for all goods. In this respect the governor fared no better than any stranger, since the "cash price" usually involved a mark-up of some three hundred per cent over the cost.

Before a year had passed, Blanshard had had enough. In November he tendered his resignation to Earl Grey. "My private fortune is utterly insufficient for the mere cost of living here, so high have prices been run up by the Hudson's Bay Company . . ." The final request which the governor made to his superiors was a rather pathetic one. "I trust that your Lordship will give directions that I may be furnished with a passage as far as Panama in one of Her Majesty's ships, as my state of health will not bear the long voyage around Cape Horn, and, being compelled to defray the expenses of

my passage out by the Hudson's Bay Company, who repudiated the bills their chairman had authorized me to draw, has so straitened my private means, that I am unable to pay the heavy expenses of the route through California."

Obviously, if it had been the intention of the Company officers to freeze out Governor Blanshard, they had succeeded. Their victory was complete, for the Colonial Office now named James Douglas, the original company nominee, to the vacant governorship. As a result, in the period from 1851 until 1856, governor and Company were for practical purposes one and the same. To advise and assist him, Governor Douglas could call upon his Legislative Council, a body whose members were appointed under Royal Commissions. Naturally enough, most of them were at the same time Hudson's Bay men as well. Harmony between governor and council was obviously not hard to achieve.

In 1856 this situation, a comfortable one for the Company, although not for the settlers who had taken land on independent terms, was rudely disturbed by a despatch from the Colonial Office, where Henry Labouchère, the famous Radical Whig, was now Secretary of State for the Colonies. While the new Secretary was inclined to agree that representative government had not been possible during the first years of the colony's life, he was very vigorous in demanding now that "steps should be taken at once for the establishment of the only legislature authorized by the present constitution of the Island. I have accordingly, to instruct you to call together an Assembly, in the terms of your Commission and Instructions." In a word, representative government had come to the colony.

Governor Douglas was, in all probability, little impressed by Labouchère's claim that the Crown could not legally "convey the authority to make laws in a settlement founded by Englishman . . . to any legislature not elected, wholly or in part, by the settlers themselves." After all "Labby" was almost a professional democrat, while Douglas was, to put it mildly, a fur-trading aristocrat! He could do nothing, however, but obey his instructions. In July of 1856 elections were held in

the four districts, and a House of Assembly met for the first time in August of that year. Of the seven members elected, one was challenged on the grounds of improper election practice, and two others on the grounds that they had failed to show the necessary property qualification. The prospects of peaceful development of the new principle were perhaps not too bright.

Even before the summoning of the Assembly, the government of the colony had taken several important steps. It had begun to levy customs duties on imports into the colony, even though the proposal had met with considerable opposition on the grounds that it would impose a serious burden upon prospective immigrants, and would realize but little in the way of revenue. Another action of the Council was to make provision for the establishment and maintenance of two schools, and in 1856 the Reverend Edward Cridge was given the responsibility of inspecting and reporting upon their operation. Mr. Cridge, it should be noted, had for two years been the Company chaplain on the Island. Justice was administered by local magistrates holding commissions as justices of the peace, and in 1854 the office of Judge of the Supreme Court of Civil Justice was created. Its first incumbent was David Cameron, another with Hudson's Bay Company connections. In fact he was Governor Douglas' brother-in-law! Needless to say his appointment aroused a fury of agitation among the settlers of Sooke and Metchosin, and a petition bearing some seventy signatures was despatched to the Colonial Office. The new Judge, it was pointed out, was not only brother-in-law to the Governor, but a clerk in the employ of the Company as well. In spite of the opposition to it, Judge Cameron's appointment was confirmed by the authorities in London, and two years later he became chief Justice of the Colony. The incident, however, probably had its effect. Several years later, when the mainland colony of British Columbia was established, its first judge was selected in England and despatched to the colony bearing his appointment with him.

Clashes of a similar nature occurred almost daily between the independent settlers on the one hand, and on the other, a governor who, they charged, was first of all an officer of the Hudson's Bay Company. Just as well, of course, for otherwise the story of the colony's first years would be painfully drab. Its development was slow, for new settlers came in very small numbers. The Company placed advertisements in British newspapers offering land to prospective immigrants, but asked £1 per acre for that land, and offered no assistance to the immigrants. In June of 1849 the first group of colonists arrived in Victoria, a party under a retired Army officer named Captain Colquhoun Grant. They found that all the land surrounding the fort itself had been reserved for Company purposes, and the nearest attractive locations for settlement were out at Metchosin and Sooke, both districts removed some miles from the post at Victoria. Grant himself had many clashes with Company officers and with Governor Douglas after 1851 before finally leaving the colony in disgust.

By the end of 1853 some 20,000 acres of land had been appropriated for use in the island; of that total all but about 1600 acres were reserved by the Hudson's Bay corporation, its agents, or its subsidiary, the Puget Sound Agricultural Company. In the years immediately following that date, other immigrants arrived, although until 1858 their numbers were few. More important was the settlement of farm lands by officers and servants of the Company who, upon retirement, decided to take land in the colony and to remain as permanent residents. To such circumstances was due largely the bulk of the settlement around Victoria.

This slow, peaceful development did not go on for long, however. In 1858 gold was discovered over on the mainland, and the strike completely altered the whole circumstances of life not only there, but on Vancouver Island as well. Until the gold rush of '58, the mainland was still essentially a preserve of the fur trader. There were a few spots where white men lived and worked, but only a few. Fort Langley, for example, was one; there the Company in the fifties employed

several score men. They ran the farms which supplied part of the produce used in the trade with the Russians to the north. They traded with the Indians for large quantities of salmon which were cured, packed in barrels, and then shipped on the Company steamer the *Beaver*. By 1853 Chief Trader Yale was supervising the annual export of some 2,000 barrels of the cured fish. Oil from the tiny oolichan was another new commodity now being shipped from Langley, and Yale had begun the practice of manufacturing isinglass from the bladder tissue of the huge sturgeon which the Indians brought in. Several hundred pounds of this product, valued sometimes as high as \$14 per pound, were annually shipped out. After 1852 there were two or three "free traders" in the area as well, making fair profits by shipping out the cranberries which they paid Indians to gather for them in the peaty fields of the Fraser delta. This was of course, "unauthorized traffic," and both Yale and Governor Douglas did their best to stop it!

Apart from Fort Langley, however, conditions in the mainland had altered very little since the days of the Nor-westers. Fort Kamloops was still prospering, and up on the Fraser and its tributaries the old New Caledonia posts continued to return furs each year. But not even the Company's grand object of supplying this region from the coast had as yet been realized, for a satisfactory brigade trail from Langley to the upper country had still to be found in 1858.

Many attempts had been made, of course, to find such a trail and to establish the necessary communications. In 1846, for example, Alexander Caulfield Anderson had explored a possible route from Kamloops by way of the Fraser, Cayoosh Creek, Seton Lake, Anderson Lake, the Lillooet River and Harrison Lake, down to the lower reaches of the Fraser. This route had the obvious advantage that it avoided the difficulties of the canyons from the Thompson forks to Yale, but it was still not an attractive route since it involved so many long portages. On his return to Kamloops, Anderson took an alternative route, up the Fraser to the point when Fort Hope was later built, then by way of the Coquihalla and the Cold-

water Rivers to Nicola Lake and thence overland by way of an easy trail to Kamloops. The early stages of this route were very difficult, and the frequent portaging which was necessary made its use as a brigade trail unattractive. The only alternative seemed to be the direct passage through the Fraser Canyon, and that was a frightful prospect. In the meantime the brigades continued to supply the interior posts over the old route through the Columbia valley.

In 1847 the murder of the Reverend Marcus Whitman and his missionary assistants in the Washington territory, and the Indian wars which resulted, forced the Company to send the New Caledonia brigade through the canyon. Under Donald Manson the brigade came down from Fort Alexandria to Kamloops, thence to Nicola Lake and overland to the Fraser by way of a trail which still can be followed to its end on the river bank at Boston Bar. (The trail runs through a motel today!) The last part of the trip through the canyon to Langley was a nightmare of toil and danger. When the furs were finally deposited at the fort, and the bales of trade goods made up for the return trip, five of the men deserted rather than face it. To cover the distance from Langley to Yale at the entrance to the canyon, took eight days through country which was easy compared to that which lay above. At Spuzzum the party rested for three days, preparing for the ordeal ahead of it. Across the river from that point the real dangers began. Horses found it difficult to stay on the narrow ledges over which the route lay, and many of them plunged into the gulfs. Thus in one day alone eighty pieces of freight were lost. One man in the brigade committed suicide rather than go on. When the train finally reached Kamloops the Company was poorer by some seventy horses, and a vast quantity of freight had been lost or abandoned.

Faced with this record, the Company decided to use the other route which Chief Trader Anderson had explored, the trail along the Coquihalla River. Fort Yale, which might have served the canyon passage, was for the moment abandoned, and Fort Hope established instead on a grassy flat only a

short distance below the point where the Coquihalla enters the Fraser. For a decade then, the brigades annually went from the interior posts to Langley and back to the interior by that route. It was the only trail in use throughout the whole of the southern region, and along its length there was nothing to encourage settlement.

Until 1858, then, the Company posts were the only evidences of the white man's presence in what is now the mainland of British Columbia. In all probability fewer than two hundred Europeans were living in the whole of that vast region. It was in fact, the last wild west, and a very wild west. And for the very few white men who travelled in it, the mountains and rivers which are its chief features, still presented almost insurmountable difficulties. Far from being conquered, the land, it seemed, was still unconquerable.

T E N

*The New El Dorado*

ON AUGUST 2, 1858, the new colony of British Columbia was created by Act of Parliament. Exactly one month later, James Douglas, already governor of Vancouver Island, was appointed governor of the newer colony as well. These formal steps had become necessary, said the framers of the Act, since so many British subjects had "by the licence and consent of her Majesty, resorted to and settled in certain wild and unoccupied territories of the northwest coast of America . . . for mining and other purposes." What those "other purposes" could have been it is hard to say. Certainly very few of "her Majesty's subjects," or any others among the motley horde of all nationalities which poured into the Fraser River region in 1858, were drawn there by anything other than the magic word "Gold!"

The new strike was located in a region which had been, until this time, prior to the gold discovery, simply British territory. In it the only sign of British authority was the Hudson's Bay Company's exclusive licence to trade, and in it the only representatives of British jurisdiction were the Company factors and traders. Throughout the whole mainland region there were probably fewer than two hundred white men, nearly all Company officials, together with a few trappers, and in 1856 and 1857, a few prospectors, drawn there from the California gold fields by rumours that placer gold was to be found on some of the river banks.

The discovery of gold in the Thompson River Valley and

on the richly auriferous bars of the lower Fraser led to the great rush of 1858, but this was by no means the first indication of the existence of precious metal in the territory. In 1851, for example, a flurry of excitement was occasioned by the news that the Hudson's Bay Company vessel, the *Una*, had brought some sixty ounces of gold down from the west coast of the Queen Charlotte Islands. Considerable interest was shown, naturally, in the American settlements along the Willamette and Columbia rivers, and in the still newer settlements in the Puget Sound area. Many a settler, having postponed breaking any more ground in 1849 and 1850 until he could try his luck in California, put off the new ploughing once again. In the fall of 1851 at least two parties left Puget Sound and reached the northern islands, but the hostility of the Haida Indians prevented any mining. In 1852 at least eight separate parties left California for the new strike, but apparently none met with success. At any rate, none of them reported gold to the authorities at Victoria. The Hudson's Bay Company itself was interested, and sent an expedition on the brig *Recovery* to Moresby Island. Gold quartz to the value of £90 was obtained in an operation at Gold Harbour but the expedition had cost the Company almost £1000. Somebody still was optimistic, apparently, for in April of 1853, Governor Douglas felt it his duty to issue a proclamation and a series of mining regulations for the islands. By that time, apparently, they were no longer needed, for the gold rush was over.

The Queen Charlotte excitement, brief as it was, served one purpose at least. Indians of the mainland for the first time became aware of the great value of the yellow metal, and began to bring both dust and nuggets to the Hudson's Bay posts. As a result, Chief Trader McLean at Kamloops, for example, found that in 1852 he had accumulated gold to the value of £200 in trade with Indians of his neighbourhood. White men, too, were by this time searching for traces of the gold. In 1853, while surveying a road through what is now northern Washington, between Walla Walla and Fort Steilacoom, George McLellan found and washed gold on the

banks of several streams in that area. In 1855 Hudson's Bay Company employees at Fort Colville were using their spare time to search for gold on the gravel beach near the post. In his diary, Governor Douglas records that in 1856, an Indian went down to the bank of the Thompson near Lytton to get a drink, and while stooping over the water saw a large nugget beneath his nose.

Such stories we may be sure lost nothing in the telling! As a result, in the summer of that same year a party of American miners arrived on the Fraser itself, camped on a bar near Fort Hope, and began to wash the gravel. They were but the first of a considerable rush to the new diggings. At any rate, by the summer of 1857 Governor Douglas had to take official notice that something untoward was happening. In July he reported to the Colonial Secretary the discovery of gold in what he called "the Couteau country," the tablelands lying between the Fraser and the Columbia. Threats of friction between prospectors and the Thompson River Indians caused the Governor at the same time to urge the appointment of an official with authority to act on the mainland. It was the Indians that Douglas was really concerned about, because they "have lately taken the high handed, though probably not unwise course of expelling all parties of gold diggers, composed chiefly of persons from the American Territories, who have forced an entry into their country."

Later in the same year, Governor Douglas again reported to his superiors on the new developments. "The reputed wealth of the Couteau mines is causing much excitement among the population of the United States territories of Washington and Oregon, and I have no doubt that a great number of people . . . will be attracted thither with the return of fine weather in the spring." At the same time, he reported that although doubtful of his jurisdiction over the mainland, he had already taken steps to cope with the extraordinary conditions which were arising, and had not only issued mining regulations but had actually begun to collect licence fees, too.

Governor Douglas' prophecy about the rush in the spring

was fulfilled in a degree far beyond his expectations. Newspapers in the Oregon and Washington settlements, such as the *Olympia Pioneer and Democrat*, carried stories in their March issues about the "Reported Gold Discoveries" and followed them up with more "Good News from the Gold Mines." By April "Highly Favourable Reports" and "Encouraging News" had crowded all other stories off the front pages.

Farther to the south the first shipment of gold from Victoria arrived in San Francisco early in April of 1858, on the Hudson's Bay steamer, the *Otter*, and caused there tremendous excitement. One of the newspapers there, the *Herald*, in its issue of April 20, described the departure that day of the steamer *Commodore* with 450 passengers, all "bound for the new diggings on Fraser's River." The San Francisco *Bulletin* was very helpful; it printed in its issue of June 4 a "full vocabulary of Chinook jargon, as used by the Indian tribes on the Fraser and Thompson Rivers." The same paper later reported in its marine intelligence that during the first two weeks of June, fifteen ships had sailed for the new gold field, each one with every available inch of space occupied.

The interest in the new strike was not confined to the settlements on the Pacific Coast. It is hardly surprising that thousands of diggers, disappointed in the California fields, would flock to the new field, but it is astonishing to see how quickly the fever spread to other parts of the world. The *Pioneer and Democrat* of November 26, devoted space to comments from other journals in such widely separated cities as Melbourne, Omaha, and London. In New York one would-be gold digger found that he had to stand in line at the shipping office for a whole day in order to reserve space on the next ship leaving for California. An English traveller and author, Kinahan Cornwallis, capitalized on the excitement in London and published a description of the new regions. It was entitled, of course, *The New El Dorado*. It is a work incidentally, which B.C. Tourist Bureau officials might consult with profit today. In his book, Cornwallis told

his English readers that now "nations have been awakened to the knowledge of another—a new—El Dorado, outvying all beside," and that as a result "that which but a brief period gone, reposed a solitary, yet riant wilderness, is now alive with the clamours of a rushing sea of men, and the foundations of cities are already laid from the Rocky Mountains to Vancouver, that hilly and forest clad isle of a thousand beauties and a nation's promise—the England of its ocean." One can well imagine the feelings of the Englishman, already stirred by such prose, who went on to read that "men who have been groping in the hazy squalor of poverty for years in this country, and might remain so forever, may at once take a plunge into the arena of wealth and all its attendant glory by embarking for the golden shores of our dazzling El Dorado."

These claims were not by any means the most fantastic to be advanced about the new mines. Even the austerity of the *London Times* was disturbed to the extent that a special correspondent, one Donald Fraser, was commissioned to send reports from San Francisco. The glowing phrases of his letters must have persuaded many to embark for the new colony, and apparently caused many, a year or so later, to wish that they could meet him personally. "Oh, that *Times* correspondent! If I could just get my hands on him!" was a cry often heard on the Cariboo road.

The summer of 1858 saw the peak of the first rush to British Columbia. During the months from April to August, sixty-seven scheduled sailings were listed from the port of San Francisco to Victoria and the Fraser River. During that time, according to the passenger lists, over 15,000 set out for the new fields, but it is significant that there was always a discrepancy between the number of passengers officially embarked, and the number who poured down the gangplank at Victoria. For example, the *Commodore* left San Francisco on April 20, with 300 passengers on its list, but arrived at Victoria with 450 on board. The *Sierra Nevada* left on June 25 with 900 passengers, but landed 1900 at Victoria on July 1.

Small wonder that historians have never been able to agree on the actual extent of British Columbia's first gold rush!

Fares on these vessels sometimes were as high as \$75.00 per passenger, but deck room could be procured for half that sum. Even for the cabin passengers, accommodations were of the roughest sort, but there is no record of any one who demanded a refund of his fare. Apparently almost anything could be endured, if it brought the gold seeker closer to the fortune which awaited him. But the miner who paid his passage from San Francisco, and shivered through the rough and rainy voyage north, still had not reached the diggings. The steamers could not enter the river itself, for there were no docks and no facilities there, so Victoria had to be their terminus. Within a few short months that little Hudson's Bay post was transformed into a bustling city, for it now became the "jumping-off place" for the new mines. Those months must have been trying ones for Governor Douglas, who had to act in a double capacity as the nearest official representative of the British government, and at the same time as the official guardian of the Hudson's Bay Company's interests in the region. He must have had some interesting arguments with himself.

A man of weaker stuff might have thrown up his hands in despair. Faced with the fact that his jurisdiction over the mainland was shadowy at best, and with the fact that the miners who poured into Victoria and thence to the Fraser River bars, were the wildest and most lawless cross-section of society, Douglas nevertheless tried to introduce British laws and provide for their enforcement. He had to provide facilities for bona fide miners, and at the same time to maintain and make effective his Company's right to exclusive trade in the gold regions.

The governor had set himself a stupendous task, and it became even tougher as immigration continued unabated, even though all but a few of the Fraser bars were still under water, with no prospect of being worked until fall. As more and more men established themselves on the river banks from

Langley up to Yale, and as more and more reached Victoria ready to begin the last lap of their journey, it soon became apparent that the most urgent task was to provide facilities for the transportation of men and supplies from Victoria to the Fraser. And the government, Governor Douglas, that is, must take the lead in this matter if there was to be any supervision over the rush of miners to the river "by boats, canoes and every species of small craft," and in most cases without the payment of the licence fee which was supposedly required.

As a solution for this difficulty, Douglas proposed an arrangement with the agents of the United States Pacific Mail Steamship Company, to operate steamers between Victoria and the falls of the Fraser River. The arrangement was to be for one year's duration, and would have given the American firm a monopoly of transport facilities in the river. In return, the steamship company would agree to carry only passengers who had already purchased their mining licences, to carry up the river only Hudson's Bay Company goods, and to pay to the Company in addition two dollars for each person carried. As a result, no person might enter the Fraser territory until he had paid, over and above his fare as a passenger, the sum of seven dollars, of which five went into public revenue, and two into the treasury of the Company. Opposition to Governor Douglas' proposal was freely expressed, so freely and so vigorously that the governor was forced in June to extend his "sufferance" plan to privately owned craft as well. The opposition was not merely vocal; unauthorized vessels were entering the Fraser in such numbers that late in June, H.M.S. *Satellite* was sent to patrol the mouth of the river to stop the unauthorized traffic. Since the *Victoria Gazette* of June 30 carried the news that over one hundred small boats were being built in "French Ravine," just behind Johnson Street, it seems that many were still planning to evade the regulations.

Some at least of the resentment against these regulations was probably really directed against the governor himself. Never one to take himself or his position lightly, Douglas

simply could not talk the language of the American miners. Since the age of sixteen he had served as a fur-trader, most of the time in the wilds of New Caledonia or Oregon, but he was very far from being a product of frontier democracy. Sir George Simpson, in reporting on Douglas' capabilities had called him "a stout powerful active man of good conduct and respectable abilities—tolerably well educated, expresses himself clearly on paper." He was, said Simpson, "well qualified for any service requiring bodily exertion, firmness of mind, and the exercise of sound judgment, but furiously violent when aroused." Faced with the kind of people who now poured into Victoria, Douglas was often "aroused!" Probably, of course, there was some truth to the oft-repeated charge that the governor acted first, last, and always as a Company man, exercising, to use the words of one American newspaper, "all the petty prohibitions, restrictions, annoyances and pompous formalities of the little tyrants of the Company." Perhaps, too, some of Douglas' own mannerisms may in part explain the wrath which his regulations invariably aroused among the American miners. At any rate, even Douglas' own subordinates—he apparently had no intimate friends—were often irritated by his pompous manner, his love of uniforms, and the orderly pacing always behind him.

The decisive blow at Douglas' proposed scheme for opening traffic on the river came not from the miners, however, but from the office of the Colonial Secretary. The new Chief Secretary, Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, objected in no uncertain terms to an arrangement which he considered to be "a deterrent to immigration," and one which was obviously designed to protect the Company's vested interest. Said the Secretary, "I must distinctly warn you against using the powers hereby entrusted to you, in maintenance of the interests of the Hudson's Bay Company in the territory. The Company is entitled, under its existing licence, to the exclusive trade with the Indians, and possesses no other right or privilege whatsoever." Here very clearly was the handwriting on the wall as far as the Bay was concerned.

By the time Douglas received this communication, however, the "sufferance plan" was already dead. In addition to the Pacific Mail Steamship Company vessels, the privately-owned *Surprise* and *Sea-Bird*, and soon after, the *Umatilla*, the *Enterprise* and the *Maria* were competing freely for passenger and freight traffic on the river. Competition and free enterprise had not reduced the rates very much, however. In October of 1858 the freight rate on the *Enterprise* was \$50.00 per ton, and even that took the merchandise only as far as Langley. Governor Douglas did his best to relieve this situation brought about by the "Yankee scamps." The company steamers, the *Beaver* and the *Otter* were both taken off the coast-wise trade and now began to ply between Victoria and the river carrying goods at the more moderate price of \$12.00 per ton. As a result of this intervention the Yankee shippers of the privately-owned craft now had to offer better service, and they began to make runs still further up the river to Fort Yale, a post which had been hurriedly re-opened by the Company in the spring. Their charges for this short but dangerous haul remained high enough to ensure that \$50.00 or more per ton continued to be the standard charge for transport of goods to the canyon entrance at Yale.

The story of these pioneer steamboaters on the lower Fraser, pushing their sternwheelers through its swift currents, over its hidden shoals, and around the murderous snags which dotted its channels, is a story which one day will surely be given the treatment it so richly deserves. It will be a lusty story, and an exciting one, for competition was keen among the skippers. Sometimes impromptu races between rival boats enlivened the journey, and passengers were pressed into service to help fire the high pressure boilers with which most vessels were equipped. At strategic points along the river-bank piles of cordwood were stacked by contractors, and as the boat pushed its bow into the muddy bank passengers and crew alike leaped ashore to throw aboard the necessary fuel. On occasion a skipper, carried away by the excitement, and over-zealous of the reputation of his craft, might even order his

cargo looted, and all hands joined in ripping open the sacks in which sides of bacon were shipped. These, of course, produced a wonderful blaze and plenty of steam! Sometimes indeed, too much steam, for boiler explosions ended the careers of several of the famous river boats. One Victorian family, the Jamesons, lost father and two sons when the *Yale* blew up in the Fraser in April of 1860, while the remaining two sons were both killed in the mysterious explosion of the *Cariboo* on its maiden voyage from Victoria in 1863.

Even for a cautious steamboater, if there was such a being, the river had difficulties and dangers enough. The tide-rips and shoal waters at the mouth of the Fraser were constant perils; so too were the shifting sand bars and treacherous currents of the reaches between New Westminster and Fort Langley. And on those sand bars submerged tree trunks often hung, their roots grounded on the bar and their tips swinging free at the surface. Many a boat attempting to run the river at night impaled itself upon such a "deadman." And above Langley, of course, the stream itself, rushing free after its release from the canyons above Yale, presented a stern test to any craft. Small wonder that sometimes miners who had made a strike above were somewhat reluctant to trust themselves and their sacks on the river boats. Said one Yankee skipper, when queried about the safety of a certain vessel, "Wal, she may do very well for passengers, but I sartinly wouldn't trust any gold on her!"

Within a year or so after the rush began, the steamboat service was in fairly regular operation. Larger craft plied back and forth between Victoria, still the port of entry, and the new town of New Westminster on the lower Fraser, while smaller sternwheelers carried the traffic from that point up to Yale. Victoria must have been a remarkable place in 1858 and 1859. Within just a few short months it became a city, and the Company post was now the centre of a sea of tents and rough shacks. Its population was, of course, a floating population, but at times it must have been as high as 20,000. The fortunate ones who brought tents lived in them; for most

of the others it was "sleep on the ground or walk around." The Company stores were quite inadequate to provision the multitude, of course, and four or five enterprising San Franciscans very quickly opened stores. Soon they were doing a booming business at prices which made even the Company's "cash price" seem reasonable. The shopkeepers who followed the miners so closely in their turn were followed by what one of them called "an indescribable array of Polish Jews, Italian fishermen, French cooks, jobbers, speculators of every kind, land agents, auctioneers, hangers on at auctions, bummers, bankrupts, and brokers of every description." Naturally enough, there were some disreputable characters among them, and the preserving of order was a problem for Douglas and his men. At any rate, Victoria's present day reputation for sobriety and decorum can hardly have been earned during its first few years!

New Westminster at the other end of the gulf passage, was a brand new city. Its site was selected by the commanding officer of the corps of Royal Engineers which had been sent out from England, and its purpose was to serve as the capital city of the new mainland colony. The site had much to recommend it. It was on high ground—actually on the first high ground to be found on the way up the river. Then too, it was on the north side of the river, and thus more easily held if "those damned Yankees" should again become obstreperous. It had deep water for docks, and it had an abundance of good timber for building purposes. With commendable speed the Engineers ran their surveys and by the late spring of 1859 building lots were on sale and a fever of construction under way. A dispute over the name for the new capital was resolved by appeal to Queen Victoria herself, who was "graciously pleased to decide that the capital of British Columbia shall be called New Westminster."

The new town perhaps hardly lived up to its status as the "Royal City," at least not during its early years. More commonly the travellers who had to stop there on their way to the gold fields, called it "Stumpville," and cursed its mud, its

mosquitoes, and its merchants. The steamboat men and the traders who composed its permanent population were apparently at least as hard bitten as the miners who flocked in and out, for the pitched battle which broke out almost every Saturday night in its saloons usually ended with about equal casualties on both sides. For every one in the town, permanent resident or transient, Saturday was the most important day of the week since it was then that the weekly horse races took place. The races, naturally, were staged on the only flat, level, and stump-cleared area for miles around—the main street of the town.

But the excitement of a building boom or the achievement of adequate communications in Victoria and New Westminster, between them and Fort Yale above, were matters of small concern to most of the people who came this way. The prospector who finally reached these new cities had had some fine experiences, but he had not yet really begun his troubles. True enough, there were some bars on the river below that point where gold was being found, but there was left on those bars not even standing room, let alone a mining claim. The gold field still lay ahead, up the canyon, and the river still had to be conquered before he could reach it.

E L E V E N

*Give Us the Tools!*

THE steamboat service which was in operation on the Fraser by the fall of 1858 had one great deficiency. It did not, and could not, get the would-be miner to the gold fields. For the bars on the lower Fraser between Yale and Langley were very soon occupied, and later comers had either to return to Victoria or to push on into and above the canyons. A hardy few elected the latter course, and managed to survive the trip up river and back. They all reported successful digging. What was more important, they all agreed that the farther up the river they went, the coarser the bold became, and the richer the return from washing. At Murderer's Bar west of Hope the few who held claims were realizing about \$20.00 a day from each "rocker," but twenty odd miles up stream at Hill's Bar, the take was over \$50.00. More significant still was the fact that on Mormon's Bar, above the canyons near the present town of Lillooet, one rocker had produced in eight days a total of \$850.00 in gold, some of it in nuggets of half an ounce in weight. These facts pointed to only one conclusion. Somewhere above the canyons must lie the source of that free gold which had been washed onto the beaches and bars of the lower Fraser. To reach that source almost any effort was worthwhile.

The difficulties of the passage through the canyons must at first sight have made that route seem almost impossible. The rapids and the current were obstacles enough; in addition, the precipitous rock walls which hem in the river for fifty

miners above Yale make portaging out of the question. Scores of foolhardy adventurers tried this route in 1858, hauling their canoes or rafts through the torrent of white water, following Indian paths cut in the solid rock, placing their clumsy miner's boots in footholds where only the Indian moccasin had heretofore found safety. Wrecked canoes and broken bodies picked up downstream at Yale and Langley bore mute testimony to the dangers of the passage. Simon Fraser, the first white man to travel this route, had been appalled by what he saw. "It is so wild that I cannot find words to describe our situation at times. We have to pass where no human being should venture." But neither his words, nor Tourist Bureau photographs, nor even an inspection of the canyon from the heights above, where today travellers stop their cars to gaze and wonder, can convey an adequate impression of what first Simon Fraser, and now the miners, must have felt. To recapture their feelings climb down the rocks and stand where the gold seekers stood, on the edge of the river itself. Feel the solid rock beneath your feet tremble under the awful surge of the current through the bottle neck of the famous Hell's Gate; then you will begin to know the hardships and the dangers which lay between the miner and his goal.

The Indians of the neighbourhood very understandably looked with some dismay upon the whites flocking into their lands. On July 14 of that first eventful summer, for example, a pitched battle took place in the canyon between a large force of Indians and a force of some 200 white miners. One of the survivors of that battle was the famous Ned Stout of Yale, and his story of his escape down the canyon was a lively experience even many years later for young researchers to listen to. For three days Stout and his three companions lay one behind the other, head to toe, in a narrow cave up in the rocks behind China Bar, while Indian marksmen on the cliffs above tried to demonstrate their marksmanship by making their arrows ricochet off the rocks into the cave's mouth.

On August 21, a mass meeting of miners at Hope drafted a petition to Governor Douglas, informing him of the dangerous situation, explaining that "decapitated, denuded corpses of unfortunate adventurers are daily picked up on the river," and asking him to take steps "to check the effusion of blood and to restore law and order." In response to the appeal, Douglas himself arrived on the spot within a week. His first act was to issue a proclamation forbidding the sale of liquor to the Indians, and no doubt this prohibition did some good. More effective, probably, was a punitive expedition up-river of some five hundred well-armed volunteers under "Captain" Snyder. The stormy atmosphere quieted somewhat following this expedition, but Indian hostility continued for several years to add to the difficulty of using the river as a route to the gold fields above.

With all these obstacles in and along the canyon route it is hardly surprising that the first efforts to push a road through to the interior should all be made by way of alternative paths. The Americans among the new mining population—and they were in the majority—were most anxious to find a trail from the Puget Sound villages. It was the Americans who had been particularly resentful of Governor Douglas' regulations, of his head tax, and his miners' licence. Among them were those who objected to any authority at all, those who detested on principle anything British, those who were enraged by the special privileges of the Hudson's Bay Company, and those who saw in the proper solution to the transport problem merely an opportunity to make a fast profit. All of them looked for an alternative to the canyon passage to the gold fields up river.

During the first days of the rush to the Fraser some enterprising individuals had made their way overland from the Willamette settlements to the Thompson River. A packer named Tucker, for example, took a large party of men and several hundred animals from the Dalles on the Columbia by way of the Similkameen and the Nicola valleys to the junction of the Fraser and Thompson rivers. But half of his

animals died en route, and three of his party were killed in a clash with Indians. Small wonder that no one followed in his footsteps.

A more practicable route from American territory to the gold fields was early suggested. The existing settlements on Puget Sound were still too far from the Fraser, but Bellingham Bay was in American territory, and only a few miles from the river. It is not surprising then that newspapers in Washington Territory now began to plump for Bellingham Bay as the terminus of a new road to the gold mines. Land speculators began to buy the land around the bay, and by June not one town, but two had been established. Prospectors who arrived in the bay that month found both Sehome (or Seahome, since the town died even before its founders could agree upon the spelling of its name) and Whatcom established on its shores. In the latter town the talk was all of incorporating. After all, the settlement of Whatcom was by this time more than four weeks old!

Even more important than the question of incorporation of Whatcom was the fact that a road joining this new metropolis to the gold fields was already in the making. In the correspondence columns of the *Victoria Gazette* for July 29, 1858, there appeared a letter from W. W. DeLacy, self-styled engineer and surveyor, who reported that he had explored two possible routes for the Bellingham Bay Trail. One, he suggested, might strike northeast to meet the Fraser near Fort Langley, and then follow the river to Hope and Yale. But this road would really solve no problems. Governor Douglas' authority was as strong at Langley and Hope as it was at Victoria, and in any event the canyon still lay ahead. The second of DeLacy's proposals was much more appealing to merchants and miners at Whatcom, for it called for a new trail overland eastward to meet the old brigade route used by the Hudson's Bay people in the days when Fort Vancouver was still the headquarters of their traffic, and the Puget Sound area was being exploited as the site of Company farming operations. In fact, DeLacy was simply using a map prepared

by Alexander C. Anderson, a former Chief Trader and now Collector of Customs on Vancouver Island. The trail to be followed lay along the Nooksack River, across to the Chilliwack River and east to its source, then over to the Skagit River and north along its valley. After reaching the headwaters of that stream, well over the 49th parallel, the trail ran by way of the Tulameen River and Otter Creek, through the Nicola Valley and across the tablelands to Fort Kamloops. From here the Fraser was easily accessible. According to DeLacy "the trail is practicable, the distance fairly short, the chances of successfully building a road good."

On the day that this report was published, a party of surveyors left Whatcom to follow in DeLacy's footsteps, with several would-be contractors numbered in the party. Behind them they left a town which was reminiscent of San Francisco in its heyday. Homes, stores, warehouses and offices were springing up like mushrooms on all sides. In the saloons the prospective settler heard nothing but talk of the future of Whatcom, the new metropolis of the west.

At a public meeting on August 2, Governor McMullin of Washington Territory gave the new town his official blessing and expressed the hope that all loyal Americans would use this port and the new trail in preference to any which would lead them through a British port of entry. Encouraged by the governor's attitude, and by the fact that Mr. Isaac Stevens, the Territory's representative at Washington, had already secured for the project the support of the Secretary of State, the townspeople redoubled their activities. By August 14, a fine wharf extended 1400 feet out across the mud-flats of the bay to deep water. In the town itself new bridges were built to span the many ravines and gullies running down to the beach. On the evening of August 17, the sound of rifle shots on the hill behind Whatcom heralded the arrival of news from the trail-builders. The next day the whole town buzzed with the report that the survey of the road had been completed and that the trail was open. The following day special editions of the *Northern Light* announced in headlines the *Final*

*Completion of the Bellingham Bay Trail*, and carried a letter from DeLacy describing the completed project in glowing terms.

For the next few weeks traffic over the Bellingham Bay road was heavy, although most of the travellers found that its builders had somewhat exaggerated its attractions. One party of twenty-two men arrived at Kamloops after taking eight weeks to cover the distance. Early in September a public meeting in Whatcom subscribed an amount sufficient to improve the route as far as the headwaters of the Chilliwack River, but before any work could be done winter closed in and heavy snows blocked everything. When spring once again made travel over the Bellingham Trail possible, two things had happened. In the first place the Fraser River "bubble" seemed to have burst, and far more miners were leaving the river than were entering it. In the second place a far better route to the gold fields had already been constructed, and was now in use. That summer, to use the classic language of all the Puget Sound newspapers, "grass grew in the streets of Whatcom."

Governor Douglas' first trip of inspection into the gold fields took place in May of 1858, when he crossed the gulf from Victoria and went up the Fraser to Yale. What he saw convinced him that the miners were correct in their assumption that the real strike would be made above the canyon. He determined now to make what he called "the provision of access to the interior," his first concern. Now the right of the governor of the colony of Vancouver Island to take upon himself the task of building roads in the mainland region would have been at best a shadowy right. In August, however, the new colony of British Columbia was created, and Douglas was named as its chief executive. Quickly the necessary commissions were drafted and despatched, and on November 19, 1858, the colony was formally established and its officers legally installed. On that day, a cold, rainy and completely miserable day, elaborate ceremonies were staged at Fort Langley. Matthew Baillie Begbie, a new Judge

for a new colony, Rear Admiral Baynes of the Royal Navy, Chief Justice Cameron of the older colony of Vancouver Island, Captain Parsons and Captain Grant of the Royal Engineers, and Inspector Chartres Brew, all took part with Douglas in what he called "the solemnity." First the Governor of Vancouver Island with due ceremony installed Begbie as British Columbia's chief magistrate. Then Begbie administered the oath of office as governor of the colony to Douglas himself. Acting in his new capacity the latter then read the proclamations which revoked the Hudson's Bay Company's licence over the area, established the new government, and formally proclaimed English law to be the law of the colony. The other officers were then installed, salutes were fired by the detachments of the Royal Engineers drawn up outside the building, and amidst the cheers of a drenched crowd of miners, Indians, and company employees, the ceremonies concluded. British Columbia, and its government, were now officially in being.

Governor Douglas had not waited for the ceremonies and the legal right to take action on what he had already decided was to be his first task—that of providing a road to the area of the upper Fraser. To build that road through the canyon was a task which was perhaps not impossible, but certainly would be both costly and slow. At the moment neither time nor money could be wasted. Another way to the northern waters of the Fraser had to be found. In a report to London in July, the Governor hinted at his plan. "Another important object which I have in view, is the improvement of the internal communications of the country which at present are for all practical purposes, nearly inaccessible beyond Fort Yale, in consequence of a range of mountains running north and south, which there interpose an almost insurmountable barrier to the progress of trade. . . .

"It is evident that the construction of a good road through that mountain barrier would be of prodigious advantage to the country; such a road might, I think, be carried through the valley of Harrison's River, at a moderate expense, to a

point near the Great Falls of Fraser's River, to the eastward of the mountains in question, from whence the country is easy of access. Should no instructions militating with that design be in the meantime received from Her Majesty's Government, I will probably make the attempt this summer." It is interesting to note that even if such instructions had been sent, they could not possibly have reached Governor Douglas before the first of October. By that time the trail was practically completed! In fact, five days after dispatching this communication, the governor had made the necessary arrangements for the building of the trail, and the message to London was only twelve days on its way when work was actually started.

The route which Douglas mentioned in his despatches, while less travelled than the others then being used, was new neither to the miners nor to Douglas himself. It was, in fact, the very path which Alexander Anderson had explored twelve years before, in his attempts to find a satisfactory brigade trail. In fact, many prospectors who had succeeded in forcing their way up the Fraser itself to the gold fields above the Fountains, had used this route on their return rather than face the awful trip back down through the canyon.

Acting on instructions from the Hudson's Bay Company, Chief Trader Anderson had traversed the route in 1846 from the upper Fraser to Fort Langley by way of a chain of lakes and connecting rivers lying west of the main stream of the Fraser, beginning at the mouth of Cayoosh Creek, near the site of today's Lillooet, and returning to the Fraser by way of Harrison Lake and Harrison River. The trip took five days, and the distance, according to his calculations, was two hundred and sixteen miles. Now Anderson's object, of course, was to locate a trail which would be suitable for the passage of the brigades, and in his report he stated that for this purpose the route was impracticable. The only feasible method of using it would be by a combination of transport on the trails by horses or mules and on the lakes by rafts or bateaux. Such a combination would involve a great deal of handling and repacking goods, and would be, according

to Anderson, "intricate and troublesome." In part, his report reads: "Upon the whole I cannot recommend the route in question as eligible under ordinary circumstances. . . . In an emergency, it might, I consider, be rendered available; but at best would offer a route extremely tedious and unsuited for the passage of a large Brigade."

Certainly the emergency which Anderson had mentioned was present in the summer of 1858. No longer was there question of the "tediousness" of the trail; men already above the falls of the Fraser were in dire need of supplies, and other men below were in the throes of gold fever and straining to get at the El Dorado above. Any trail that was passable was suitable for the miners of '58! The initiative in the matter was apparently taken by the miners themselves, although it was Douglas who first proposed the Harrison Lake route, and who now took steps to secure more recent information than that available in the Company files. Early in July the little sternwheeler *Umatilla* sailed from Victoria up the Fraser, through Harrison River, and up to the most northerly end of Harrison Lake. On board in addition to officials, was a "special correspondent" of the *Victoria Gazette*, who reported to his paper that the voyage proved the Harrison River, and the Lake as well, to be "perfectly navigable." He noted, however, that near the mouth of Harrison River there were shoals which might hamper navigation if the river dropped to any appreciable extent—the same shoals which later caused so much of the difficulty of using this route.

With navigation to the head of Harrison Lake apparently assured, further plans were set afoot immediately. When the *Umatilla* returned to Victoria, Captain Ainsworth waited upon Governor Douglas at the official residence to make his report. The interview took place on the porch of Government House before a keenly interested audience of several hundred miners. At its conclusion, Douglas addressed the crowd, "assuring them of his interest." Three days later, on July 31, the *Victoria Gazette* gave great prominence to a story that a group of miners had approached the Governor with a

proposal to build a trail themselves. In his report to London, Douglas stated that the miners had volunteered their services on terms so advantageous that "it would have been unwise of me to decline them." Here was a magnificent understatement, for the terms of the contract now proposed, while perhaps unique in roadbuilding history, were most certainly "advantageous" to the government!

The arrangement which was now made was that five hundred miners were to enroll as a working corps. Each one of them was to deposit with the Hudson's Bay Company the sum of twenty-five dollars as a guarantee that the work would be completed. No pay would be given for the work, but the government undertook to transport the workers to the commencement of the trail "free of charge," and to refund their deposit when the trail was completed. No welfare state, this! This refund, it was agreed, was to be in goods at Victoria prices. In addition, the miners agreed to construct bateaux on the lakes using tools and nails supplied by the government. Finally, it was stipulated that for two weeks after the completion of the trail it would remain closed to "promiscuous" travel, so that its builders might have a fortnight's advantage in finding and staking their claims. This, of course, was their pay; no government ever hired cheaper labour.

This rather unorthodox contract was agreed upon at a miners' meeting held on August 2 in the Company fort. All next day applications and deposits were received. On Wednesday, August 4, a notice appeared in the *Gazette* that registrations were complete and that no further applications would be accepted. On Thursday, under Alexander C. Anderson, the same man who had discovered the route, the first working party left Victoria. Most of its members were British or American, but there was a decided sprinkling of Danes, French, Germans, Africans, and Chinese. The workers were divided into groups of twenty-five, each under an elected captain, who was in turn responsible to "Superintendent" Adams, the representative of the miners, and to Commissioner Anderson, the representative of the government.

The *Gazette* of August 6, devoted most of its space to a graphic description of the departure of the miners, and to an announcement that it had, at complete disregard for expense or trouble, arranged to have a correspondent among the workers. If possible, the anxious ones left at Victoria were to get a blow by blow description of the battle! In another section of the same issue there appeared a brief announcement that Messrs. Donahoe and Company, of San Francisco, had already commenced the construction of a small sternwheeler specially designed for use in the Harrison River. Not only was there plenty of enterprise in those days, but apparently no lack of risk capital either. I cannot remember at the moment the current view of the economists on this combination of circumstances, nor whether it is supposed to lead to boom or depression. In British Columbia in 1858 a lot of enterprise and a little of capital between them built the colony's first highway.

*The Road to Cariboo*

THE MINERS who had been fortunate enough to have their labour accepted by the government, arrived at the north end of Harrison Lake on August 7. Here they found a party of at least two hundred others encamped, simply sitting waiting there until the river, which empties into the lake at that point, should drop enough so that they could pole or tow their canoes up its length to the next lake above. Without any delay the men fell to work. On August 8 a storehouse was erected, not at the mouth of the entering river, but at a point some thousand yards to the east, on the shore of a smaller lake opening out of the Harrison, and joined to it by a short, navigable creek. The choice of the road terminus was a most unwise one; for this and for all the other errors which they were guilty of, the roadbuilders had only one excuse, their tearing hurry to get on with the job. To illustrate both their speed and their methods, we can turn to the proud reports sent back to Victoria by the *Gazette* correspondent. On the morning of August 9, work started on the actual cutting of the trail. By nightfall two and a half miles had been opened, and optimism ran high around the camp-fires that night. On the tenth a heavy rain fell, and little work was done, but a discussion about supplies brought a sudden realization that a dock of some sort would be necessary back at the terminus. Next day a group of workers was sent back to begin the construction of a wharf. The question of a name for the site was discussed at the same time, and eventually, although not

without some argument, the name of Port Douglas was finally agreed upon.

On September 3 the advance party had reached Little Lillooet Lake. (The miners adopted instead the Indian name Tenass Lake.) By this time the difficulties and dangers of their self-imposed task were beginning to be apparent to the builders. They were now completely out of provisions, and three men sent back down the trail to speed up the promised mule-train had themselves failed to return. Stories of the hostility of the Lillooet Indians above found receptive ears among men who already had heard of the reported massacres in the Fraser canyon. Fears that the party was cut off began to spread as the result of an entirely imaginary report that Port Douglas itself had been burned by hostile natives. It was just as well that none of the builders seem to have heard the stories which are now part of Indian legend in the neighbourhood—stories about the giant Susquatches, those hairy monsters who are supposed to inhabit the remote valleys behind Harrison Lake. Perhaps one would be unkind in assuming that the Indians themselves did not know the legend yet. But even without these particular bogeys there was quite enough cause for alarm, and two extremely nervous days passed. Late in the afternoon of September 4, the suspense was ended by the arrival of a pack train of five mules. The provisions which the train carried, however, were sufficient for only a few days, and the problem of supplies continued to bedevil the project until its completion.

Occurrences such as this inevitably led to strife and dissatisfaction among the miners. The mule team service had not assured—indeed never did assure—a satisfactory means of hauling supplies. Commissioner Anderson, who might have acted as a liaison officer between the men on the trail and the officials in Victoria, found it necessary to precede the working parties along most of the route, blazing trees or otherwise outlining the path. In his absence, Superintendent Adams became target of all the abuse, and one of the worst spots on the trail was named, in his honour, "Adam's Hole."

As work progressed on the next section, that between Lillooet Lake and Anderson Lake, the difficulties continued to multiply. The country through which the road now ran is almost level but for miles it is full of swamps. Methods of building over them had to be devised then and there. Then too, as a result of the murder of a Lillooet native by two "Boston men," the Indian scare rose again. On the completed road down near Port Douglas forest fires swept through the area and made necessary almost complete rebuilding of some sections. Even the weather seemed to turn against them, for that year sharp frost came early in September.

In spite of all these difficulties, except for a stretch of several miles from the eastern end of Seton Lake to the banks of the Fraser, the work was practically finished by the middle of October. Just as the end of their labour was so nearly in sight, the miners received news of what to them was the worst kind of ingratitude. Orders arrived that the work crews should now report back to Port Douglas for full settlement of their contracts. Men who had been working in the bush for two months, without pay, and who were now within a few miles of the rich claims which they sought, could hardly be made to see the necessity of retracing their steps to Port Douglas, there to receive supplies which they themselves had paid for, and then to pack those supplies back up the trail once more! It was only fair, they claimed, that the twenty-five dollar deposit should be refunded in supplies at Victoria prices and delivered, not at Port Douglas, but at the other end of the trail. The government at Victoria was unwilling to meet this demand, and only after much bitter argument was a compromise reached. The road-cutters were offered the alternative of accepting goods in Port Douglas at Victoria prices, less \$100.00 per ton, or of receiving these goods at the other end of the trail with the \$100.00 per ton charge added to Victoria prices. Since the packers who immediately afterwards began to operate over the trail, charged \$260.00 per ton, it will be seen that the miners who accepted the latter offer were a little the wiser.

Though the Douglas trail was now virtually completed, the story of the wrangling and the bitterness connected with its building had just begun. In the first place, the road itself was soon to prove inadequate. In part this was because of the haste with which its route had been chosen, and in part because the men who built it were much more concerned with forcing their own way through the difficult spots than with making the way easy for those to follow. In addition, the trail had been intended for use by men and pack trains only, but the increasing numbers soon established above the Fountains, made a wagon road an absolute essential if sufficient supplies were to be freighted. Something more than a mere pack trail was already necessary.

The expenditure of about £14,000 on the project had already put a severe strain upon the finances of the infant colony. By the spring of 1859, however, still further expenditures had become necessary for the trail obviously had to be widened and improved. Because of the difficulty of hauling over it, freight charges were still very high, and packers were now charging eighteen cents per pound. Another difficulty was that steamboat proprietors had found it almost impossible to navigate the shoal water at the mouth of the Harrison, where in the winter at times the water had dropped to a level of only eighteen inches.

Fortunately for Governor Douglas, the problem of the improvement of the Harrison trail was simplified somewhat by the arrival in British Columbia of the Royal Engineers. This corps now took charge of all surveying in the new colony, and its leader, Colonel R. C. Moody, became Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works. One of the first jobs on his list was that of widening and improving the trail from Port Douglas to the new town of Lillooet on the Fraser; by way of preparation Moody now sent Lieutenant Palmer to go over the road and report.

As a professional engineer Lieutenant Palmer was horrified at the haphazard way in which the route had been laid out. He

objected first of all to the site chosen for Port Douglas, situated as it was on a small land-locked inlet, connected with Harrison Lake itself by a creek which was navigable as to depth, but which was so narrow and tortuous as to present serious difficulty for any steamboat larger than the little *Umatilla* which had pioneered the course.

The trail to Lillooet began here, rising abruptly out of the town. Two miles from its beginning it was five hundred feet in the air. Many a "tenderfoot" on his way to a fortune in the gold fields must have gulped when he first saw the toilsome slope ahead of him. The miners themselves called this slope "Sevastopol," probably because it was (and is yet) so fiercely defended by its garrison of giant mosquitoes. The trail followed the east bank of the Lillooet River along its course from Lillooet Lake, some thirty-odd miles to the north. Lieutenant Palmer was of the opinion that a more sensible path lay along the western bank, where already ran an old Indian trail. According to him "it is a well-known circumstance that the Indian trails throughout North America invariably follow the best line of travel through a wild country." Short of relocating the entire road, however, nothing could now be done.

About twenty-nine miles from Port Douglas, the trail reached Little Lillooet, or Tenass Lake, where a terminus eventually was built. Over low marshy ground the road continued about half a mile to the shore of Lillooet Lake itself. In 1860, the year after Palmer's survey was made, boats were being used on Tenass Lake, and in the same year the engineers linked the two lakes by a corduroy road.

Down the length of Lillooet Lake some thirteen miles in all, everything had to go by water. At first flat-bottomed bateaux were used, but by October of 1860 the sternwheeled steamer *Martzelle* was operating from Port Pemberton at the northern end of the Lake. Governor Douglas made a trip through this district in 1860 and reported that settlers had already taken up residence in and around this new town. "I

never saw," he said, "better garden stuffs of all kinds, especially tomatoes and cucumbers, which were exceedingly fine."

From Pemberton to Anderson Lake the trail which Lieutenant Palmer followed ran north-east over low swampy land about twenty-five miles. On Anderson Lake rowboats and bateaux again carried all traffic, until October of 1860 when the sternwheeler *Lady of the Lake* commenced operation. Governor Douglas, in one of his despatches to London told some of the circumstances of this undertaking, and thereby sheds some light on the men who pioneered the road. "Two large sternwheel steamers, intending to ply on Lakes Anderson and Seton, are nearly completed by an association of settlers, who, at much labour and expense, packed the boilers and the engines from Douglas over the Harrison road. To give an idea of the difficulty of the undertaking, I may mention that the boilers, being too large and too heavy to carry on mules, were cut into five sections and then rolled over the trail . . ." Even the feat of packing a piano in over this path — and legend has it that many were thus transported — pales into insignificance when one thinks of starting to roll by hand a metal hoop weighing about a quarter of a ton over fifty miles of the roughest, most mountainous country in North America.

From the end of Anderson Lake, a short portage of one and a half miles led to Seton Lake. This stretch of trail was not built by the miners of '58, for while they were involved in their dispute with Victoria over the delivery of supplies, an enterprising individual named Carl Dozer had completed the road himself, established a wagon service of his own, and was now reaping his profits from a charge of one cent per pound of merchandise. To facilitate transport, Dozer had built a tramway of wooden rails, and employed helpers to push wheeled carts over the rails to Seton Lake. From there freight and passengers were once again carried by boats down to the eastern end of that lake and then over a short trail to the banks of the Fraser.

Upon his return to headquarters, Lieutenant Palmer made his report to Colonel Moody and to Governor Douglas. To change the position of Port Douglas, in which town lots had already been sold, was manifestly impossible, and to re-route the whole road on the west bank of the Lillooet River would involve expenditures which at that time could not be considered. What could be done was to widen the trail and turn it into a wagon road and to build more permanent bridges to carry heavier traffic. By the end of the summer the engineers had completed this work.

To finance this rebuilding, as well as other road work in the colony, Douglas' ingenuity was often taxed to the utmost. The problem would be solved, of course, if London capital could be interested, and Judge Begbie after making his first journey up the Yale-Lytton trail and back by way of the Harrison, proposed a plan to that end. His scheme was to invite private firms to build roads in return for the right to levy a toll of five cents per pound on all goods carried over them. Douglas, however, preferred to find his own way out of his difficulties. It was typical of the governor and his public works programme, that construction itself was always the first step, financing always the second. Already he had imposed a levy of twelve shillings per ton on "all wares, goods and merchandise transported or taken from New Westminster to any place in British Columbia," such levy to become effective on January 1, of 1860. He tried, too, to levy the famous "mule tax" by his proclamation of January 31, 1860. By this means the government hoped to collect a fee of £1 sterling on every horse or mule leaving Lytton or Douglas for the interior. The opposition to this proposal was, to put it mildly, rather violent, and the tax was discontinued after only £150 had been collected. It was by such devices, however, all of them unpopular, and some of them quite unconstitutional, that the work on the road was financed.

By the time the engineers' work of turning the old trail into the Douglas Wagon Road had been completed, the need for such a road seemed to have disappeared. It had proven

to be, even with its improvements, "too tedious and troublesome" to be of real commercial importance. Passing over this way from Victoria to the Cariboo mines goods had to be handled at least eight times. The expense of all this handling and portaging increased prices of goods to such an extent that flour, for example, never fell below 50¢ per pound, and butter never lower than \$1.25. It is little wonder then, that even while the Douglas Wagon Road was being built, demands were heard that the alternative route through the canyon should be made available. By 1862 the reverberation of dynamite blasting in the canyon signalled the beginning of the end for the Douglas-Lillooet road.

The life of this, the first Cariboo Highway, was very brief, but packed with action. Towns of surprising vigour appeared along its route, flourished briefly, had real estate booms, and passed away, all within the space of four or five years. Fortunes were won and lost in the "mile-houses" which sprang up at much more frequent intervals than were really necessary. Of all this, however, pitifully little remains today in the form of any permanent record, for to the miners or government officials who travelled that way, this was simply "the road to Cariboo," and fortunes were made only after one had passed over it. However, some few painstaking individuals, such as Captain John Evans of the famous "Welsh Miners," did record their impressions of the road, and from their letters and diaries you can travel the first part of the road in imagination, even if you do not care to face the wilderness which has reclaimed the old path. Of course, the second half of the road, from Pemberton Portage to Lillooet, is for all practical purposes, the right of way for the P.G.E. Railway, and thus there is still another reason for taking a trip on that famous road. But more of that in another place.

For some years a regular steamboat service was maintained between New Westminster and the town of Port Douglas. At that town were the necessary wharves, stores, hotels and the inevitable saloons. Two years after its founding, the town had a permanent population of over three hundred, and a

floating population of many times that number in the seasons when miners were moving to and from their claims in the Cariboo. Packers, storekeepers and hangers-on lived in their square log huts huddled at the foot of the long Douglas hill. Up that slope toiled the goldseekers, on foot, on horseback or in wagons. When the Welsh miners went through on their way to Barkerville in 1863, so steep was the incline and so heavy the loads in their wagons, that the Welshmen had to labour in the traces ahead of the horses, and only the combined efforts of men and beasts brought their carts to the top of the hill. Another party which made the trip in the same year covered only eight miles in the first day out of Port Douglas, "as the route was exceedingly steep and rugged, and the heat oppressive. At nightfall we slept in spite of the mosquitoes. Next day we stopped at the Hot Springs where we enjoyed a good meal of bacon and beans, and a good wash—this last the only really cheap comfort obtainable in B.C."

In the town of Douglas the citizens were wont to blame government officials in Victoria or New Westminster for many of the drawbacks of the road out of their town. A fierce civic pride seems to have burned in the breast of one correspondent to the *British Colonist* in 1859 when he claimed that "the town, in my opinion is destined e'er [*sic*] long, to rank with Sacramento in California," but at the same time he censured a government which kept sixty-eight men occupied in maintenance of a road which needed at least three hundred. The correspondence columns of the *Colonist* during the next two years echo the same complaint over and over.

At the end of the Douglas Portage, on Tenass Lake, was the most pretentious road house of the lot, the famous "29 Mile House." Here, it was claimed, more money was lost at cards than was ever taken out of the mines! At the other end of Lillooet Lake was the first "large town" on the road, the town of Port Pemberton. In the rich meadow land above this place settlers already had taken land, and at least two farmers, known to the miners only as "Scotty" and "Wattie" were

selling potatoes and other vegetables to the travellers passing through the town. In fact, these two are among the very few who must really have made a fortune in the gold rush, for they charged, for example, one dollar apiece for their cucumbers, and seventy-five cents for each tomato!

From Port Pemberton to the southwest end of Anderson Lake the road ran over flat and sometimes marshy ground, around Summit Lake and on to Anderson, glorified by name apparently, because it possessed a wharf and a saloon. At the other end of the lake was the town of Wapping, joined to its "sister city," of Flushing on Lake Seton, by Carl Dozer's wooden tramway. From Flushing the traveller took boat again down the lake and then by road again to the Fraser.

At the end of the road lay the town of Lillooet. In the period from 1860 to 1863, residents in this town must have been of a convivial nature, since it supported no fewer than thirteen saloons and twenty-five houses licensed to sell liquor. In 1860 solace for the spiritual thirst was provided as well, in St. Mary's Church which was then built. No better illustration of the cosmopolitan nature of Lillooet's population can be found than in the records of that church. The first public ceremony performed there was the wedding of a "Mexican" couple, immigrants from San Salvador, while a few weeks later a burial service was read for the interment of a negro. On a flat bench overlooking the town still stands its most famous natural feature, the "hanging tree." Considering the number of tourists who have climbed up to look at it, it is perhaps a shame to add that although the tree is ideally suited for the purpose of a necktie party, there is no evidence that anyone was ever hanging from it.

Sporadic activity in the Bridge River kept Lillooet in the public eye even though the construction of the new Cariboo road some miles east of the Fraser shifted the important title of "junction city" to Clinton. Of the other towns which we have mentioned, however, little or no trace remains. A town of Pemberton still flourishes some five miles up the valley from its original site, and on the present railway line, but

Anderson, Wapping, Flushing, and Douglas have all disappeared. Along the way from Pemberton to Lillooet there are many places where the old road is still perfectly practicable. Parts of it, of course, have disappeared into the railway grade, and parts of it have been incorporated into a road — of a sort — which is maintained now between Anderson Lake and Pemberton, but much of it is still just as the gold rush left it. In the middle of brawling little streams still stand triangular log piers on which the bridge timbers rested, and the remains of cabins and mile-houses may still be seen.

The Douglas Road had a hectic life, but a short one. By the summer of 1863 road construction in the canyon of the Fraser was in fact hastening the end of the older highway. Business firms in Yale, for example, could with a pardonable degree of smugness now advertise that they could deliver goods to the Cariboo mines in three to five days, and at a cost of six cents per pound. This in contrast to what one of their handbills facetiously called "The High-Toned and Elegant Route to Cariboo." Shippers and travellers were urged not to trust to advertisements, not even this one! Instead:

Take a splendid steamer at New Westminster for Harrison River. There hire Elegant Indian Canoes to pole you over the rapids. . . . Wade four sloughs and swim one small river to reach a high toned propeller which runs at the speed of two miles per hour (wind permitting). No close confined cabins on board, but pure wholesome air on deck, with the privilege of sticking your nose in the Cook's galley to warm it. No extra charge. Twenty-five hours will take you to the mouth of the Douglas Slough where she connects with capacious canoes, fare \$200 to the edge of the ice at Douglas Rancheries (smallpox here but don't hurt white man, only kills Indians) then foot it to Douglas. Foot it again to 29 mile house over four feet of snow. The little lake being frozen over, walk around to Lillooet Lake—scenery delightful. There catch another elegant steamer if you can; if you can't wait a day or two—meals only \$1.00. When the steamer toots her horn get aboard and rest yourself on the open deck for 4 hours; weather moist or air keen. Reach Pemberton; good meals there for \$1.00 each, beds 50c. Crawlers gratis (Smallpox blankets carefully

washed). Foot it for 24 miles to Andersons Lake, catch a steamer if you can; rest again on the open deck; foot it again for  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles or take a ride on the railroad car (?) to Lake Seaton; catch another splendid steamer, if she's in repair, for Port Seaton; foot it again  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles to Lillooet; rest there three or four days (the smallpox is played out, Indians all killed); then swim your horse across the Fraser (if the ice permits) to Parsonville; then run him up Pavilion Mountain to help circulation. Take this route by all means and shun the Yale and Lytton Road. It is a humbug! There are no delays on that route, no portages, no extortion, no sloughs to wade, no creeks to swim.

With the completion of the obviously much superior Fraser Canyon Highway, traffic almost stopped on the older road. The merchants and hotel keepers along that road naturally did what they could to encourage travel their way, to magnify the hardships and difficulties of the other route, and to prod unwilling government officials into action to keep the old trail open. Their efforts, however, were all in a losing cause. A letter to the editor of the New Westminster *British Columbian*, in March of 1864, claimed that the Port Douglas merchants had four hundred tons of merchandise ready for shipment as soon as the government would take action to open the road, still closed by reason of the winter's slides and snowfall. An editorial in the same issue pointed out "The Douglas-Lillooet route may or may not be the best road to Cariboo . . . . But, now the roads are made, there can be but one opinion as to the duty of the Executive in keeping these roads in reasonable state of repair." Once more that spring contracts were let and work crews went out to repair the winter damage, but this was the last time. The repairs which were carried out that year were the last ever undertaken; no more public money was ever spent upon the Douglas road.

*The Great North Road*

BY THE AUTUMN of 1859, the excitement of the first rush to the Fraser was over. In fact, on the road to Lillooet that year the number of miners coming out was much greater than the number of new prospectors moving up to the fields. In New Westminster and in Victoria merchants closed their hastily erected shops and joined the crowds heading back in disgust to San Francisco, bitterly denouncing the "Fraser River Humbug." Even the more accessible diggings on the Lower Fraser were beginning to disappoint the miners who had been fortunate enough to get the early claims. In the spring and summer most of the bars were under water and could not be worked, while claims on the tributary streams above the Fountains were producing wages, but not much more, for their owners. The inadequacy of the road from Harrison to Lillooet had created a scarcity of supplies for the men above the terminus, and those supplies which were laboriously packed in were selling at almost astronomical prices. There were a few fortunate individuals with enough capital to sink shafts into the "dry diggings" on the benches along the Fraser and Thompson Rivers, or to run wooden flumes to bring a stream of water down to their claims and use large scale sluicing of the gravel. But to most of the miners who struggled into the Cariboo country, capital was what they had come to seek — very few had brought it with them.

In the chorus of disgust and disillusionment there were still a few optimistic voices, however. They belonged to the

hardy few who were still hopeful of "striking it rich further up," and who pressed deeper and deeper into the wild interior country. Some went up the Thompson River, some up Cayoosh Creek, and some up Bridge River into the region of today's large scale operations. Best fortune of all awaited those who kept on up the Fraser to its junction with the Quesnel River, and then up that stream to Cariboo Lake. Here the bars proved richer than any yet prospected, and much of the gold was in coarser form. As the news began to trickle in to the saloons in New Westminster and Victoria, excitement began to grow again. By the winter of 1859 probably a thousand men were working in the Quesnel area, and by the summer of the following year, at least three times that number were digging for gold or searching for claims.

It was early in 1860 that the first of the famous Cariboo creeks was discovered. A party headed by "Doc" Keithley and George Weaver staked claims on a little creek running into the Quesnel, and had spectacular returns. Keithley Creek was but the first of that series of strikes which made the name of Cariboo famous the world over. There is a whole network of streams in this country, all having their sources in the high lands of Bald Mountain or of Mount Agnes. Some of them flow south or west to join the Quesnel or Cottonwood Rivers, the others drain north or west into the Fraser as it flows north from the Rockies. They all were rich in gold.

The strike at Keithley Creek caused tremendous excitement, and a rush to the spot. The number of claims which could be staked was of course limited, and the more venture-some pushed on. Two among them, John Rose and Edward McDonald, struck even richer deposits in the gravel along Antler Creek. Within a matter of weeks there was a rush to that stream, too. A very hard winter made work impossible for weeks, but when Gold Commissioner Nind arrived at Antler Creek in February he found over four hundred miners camped in what he called "holes dug in the snow," waiting to work the claims they had already staked. Rose and McDonald were living in the style to which they were entitled,

settled in comfort in the only cabin on the creek. That same winter, a party led by Ned Stout and William Dietz, the "Dutch Bill" of Cariboo immortality, crossed Mount Agnes to the eastward slope of the divide and descended upon William's Creek. This was, beyond a doubt, the richest and most famous of them all. Sad to relate, the men who made the strike seemed to get least from it. Dutch Bill's claim was a "bust," and so was Ned Stout's, but others, the Steel, the Ericson, and the Cameron mines, all became world famous. The Ericson claim, for example, was reported to have yielded \$53,000 in six days, Bill Diller's produced about \$10,000 each week in 1862, and "Cariboo" Cameron took from his property in the first six months of 1863 gold to the value of \$385,000. Mines on other creeks nearby, such as the Lightning and the Lowhee, proved only a little less profitable.

Once again the citizens of Victoria found the "Cariboo fever" raging fiercely in their midst. A Government Street jeweller displayed a sign in his window reading "Selling off at cost! Hurrah for the Cariboo!" Once again steamers running from Victoria to the Fraser found their accommodation taxed to the utmost. Once again a Victoria newspaper engaged a special correspondent to report the news direct from the fields. "There can be no mistake this time!" declared an editorial in the *British Colonist*.

Miners who had taken part in the rush of 1858 found an entirely different situation facing them when they returned to the new strikes in 1861 and 1862. They had a much longer and a much harder road to travel and they found at its end claims which in most cases had to be worked at considerable depth, thus requiring the investment of capital before the returns began to come in. Their difficulties were increased because of the fact that they were forced either to haul their own supplies in, or to pay the packers' heavy charges for that service. As a result, in 1862 the unfortunate miner at William's Creek had to pay \$5.00 per pound for candles, and \$1.50 for a box of matches. Butter sold for \$5.00 and flour for \$2.00 per pound. When they were available at all, potatoes brought

\$115.00 for a 100 pound lot. These prices in no way represented an exorbitant profit for the packer or the merchant; they were simply the inevitable result of the almost incredible difficulties in the path of anything like normal commercial traffic. We have already seen something of the inadequacies of the only existing wagon road and the repeated handling of goods necessitated by its peculiar nature. Add to those defects the additional fact that the road ran only as far as Lillooet, a point roughly one-third of the way to the new field; for the rest of the distance only a rough track existed. To make the lot of the Cariboo miner even more difficult, during the winter of 1861-1862, the most severe winter recorded in the colony's history, the Douglas-Lillooet road was closed for almost four months by snow and landslides. Everything added to the inescapable conclusion that a more practical and more permanent road to the Cariboo was an essential, and that it was the duty of the government to provide that road.

The direct route through the Fraser Canyon had been avoided in 1858 because its nature was such that to construct a road through it would have taken more time than could be spared, and would have required the expenditure of much greater sums than the governor had at his disposal in 1858. But now the richness and permanence of the Cariboo mines seemed apparently assured, and at long last the government could consider such a project as the construction of a wagon road direct to the mines.

It must not be assumed that the construction of the Douglas-Harrison trail in 1858 had resulted in routing all traffic away from the older trail through the canyon. As a matter of fact, some packers continued to take in supplies by the Yale-Lytton trail in order to serve those miners encamped on the bars in the canyon itself, preferring that much more difficult trip to the long roundabout journey up to Lillooet from Harrison and back down the Fraser to Lytton. Nor must it be assumed that the government had completely lost interest in the possibility of building a wagon road through the canyon. At Governor Douglas' request,

Judge Begbie himself made a trip up the Fraser canyon trail in 1859; his report to Douglas probably confirmed the governor in the opinion that it was "extremely doubtful whether it would be worthwhile *at present* to engage in any improvements on this part of the line. . . ." Note, however, the italicized phrase.

The trail which had been cut from Yale to Lytton, running along the east bank of the stream, was apparently the only facility which the government intended to provide for the moment. That even this was not being properly maintained was the burden of a petition from the miners at Yale during the winter. Perhaps in answer to their demands, a party under Sergeant McColl of the Royal Engineers made some improvements during the following summer, but packers in 1861 were still hauling supplies by boat and towline up the canyon, rather than face the trail on the cliffs above. R. Byron Johnson, a young English immigrant who worked for a firm of packers engaged in hauling supplies by this route, made a book out of his experiences. In his book, aptly titled *Very Far West Indeed*, he tells how the boats were hauled through the canyon from rock to rock by towlines. His party took twelve days to haul their load from Yale to Lytton, and a very tough twelve days it was. The return trip, shooting the rapids in all but the worst places, took nine hours!

The strikes up on the Cariboo creeks in 1860 and 1861 apparently changed Douglas' mind about the possibility of a canyon road. As miners poured into the upper country to reach the new diggings the problem of their supply became a pressing one, particularly with the Douglas-Lillooet road closed during the winter. Once again an emergency faced the government of the colony, and once again that government took immediate steps to meet the emergency. Fortunately for the governor, the financial difficulties which had hindered his road schemes of 1858 were to a very large extent now relieved. The fiscal year of 1860 in fact, showed a surplus of some \$30,000, as compared to a deficit of some \$11,000 for the previous year. Increased revenues from customs duties had

brought about this happy state of affairs, and there was every reason to believe that with the heavy influx of men and supplies in 1861, the financial position of that year might be even better.

Even before the startling news from the Cariboo mines was confirmed, Governor Douglas had made his first move. In June of 1860, Franklin Way and Joseph Beedy signed a contract with the governor for the construction of a "mule trail" from Yale to Spuzzum, at a cost of £4300, while in August the firm of Powers and McRoberts began the construction of a similar trail from Spuzzum to Boston Bar. But trails, no matter how well-constructed, would not meet the demands of the heavy traffic which, if the news from the Cariboo was correct, would flow north in the spring. Probably no one realized this fact more clearly than the governor himself. At any rate, on August 10 the governor presented to the legislature the Spuzzum Road Bonds Act to authorize the construction of a wagon road through the canyon. Contractors who undertook all or any part of the work were to be paid in 6% bonds with payment guaranteed by a system of road tolls. And to facilitate the public works programme for this and the following year, the government had already made arrangements to float an initial loan of £25,000.

These bills provided the authority for Governor Douglas' road building plans, but they gave him only a fraction of the money which he needed. In March of the following year he appealed to the Colonial Office, and asked for permission to offer to the public another bond issue to realize £50,000. When this was granted, he appealed for authorization of a further loan of £15,000 to £20,000. Long before he received the reply to this request, the governor presented to his legislature, an act authorizing total loans of £100,000 for road building purposes. On the following day he asked the Colonial Office for permission to do what he had already done. After some rather sharp debate the Colonial Office agreed to accept the British Columbia Loan Act, stipulating, however, that the total loan was not to exceed the original £50,000.

By the time the funds for the government's public works programme were legally secured, the money had long been spent. Early in the spring of 1862 contracts were let for the most ambitious scheme yet undertaken by the new colony, the construction of a wagon road from Yale up through the canyon to the Cariboo gold fields. With the Engineers at work on the road near Yale, private contractors undertook the northern section, and work was pressed forward all summer and fall. By the beginning of 1863 the job was well on the way to completion, and when Captain Grant of the Engineers inspected it in the summer he found that a highway was almost in being. The road from Yale to Spuzzum was already in use and in good shape, although across the river the road to Chapman's Bar was still not quite completed. A few sections of the road from Chapman's Bar to Boston Bar had not yet been finished, but the work was being pushed. The Boston Bar to Lytton road, however, was ready for use and in fine shape. In other words, a wagon road was now virtually completed, running from Yale to Spuzzum on the west bank of the canyon, and from a point almost opposite on the east bank, up the river as far as Lytton. There remained now the important task of linking the two sections.

This project, the erection of a bridge across the canyon at Spuzzum, was assigned to Joseph Trutch and his associates, who in February agreed to build the required bridge in return for a five-year charter of toll privileges. Among the many stories which have been told to illustrate the ingenuity and perseverance of British Columbia's pioneers, none is more striking than that of the building of this bridge. A party of Royal Engineers under Sgt. McColl had selected the site and helped to draft the plans, but even with that help the task which faced the contractors was a staggering one. Fortunately, none of them knew enough about engineering to appreciate just how staggering! Obviously the structure had to be of the suspension type, for no bridge piers will ever be erected in this river bed! But how to hang a structure as wide as this one had to be? Trutch's answer was the same as that of the

designers of the most modern bridges. Miles of wire were hauled up to the bridge site, woven into two great four-inch cables, and both then suspended from towers built upon the rock banks of the chasm. At long last in November, everything was ready. A heavily loaded wagon drawn by six mules clattered out on the wooden decking and across to the other side. "Deviation," said the Engineers' report, "was negligible." I would wager that the relief of the driver, whoever he was, was a little more than negligible!

For many years the Alexandra Bridge stood as a monument to Trutch's skill and luck and perseverance, and for many years the annual spring floods battered in vain at its two anchor piers. Eventually, however, the super-flood of 1894 carried away parts of the piers and the bridge went down. Since part of the highway below the bridge had already been swallowed by the C.P.R., there was no urgency about rebuilding, and for years British Columbia's only highway continued to live with this hole in its middle. (An enterprising individual did erect a cable and bucket arrangement across the canyon between Yale and Spuzzum and for a charge of a dollar permitted a traveller to load himself in the bucket and haul himself across the gorge. Until well on in the twenties this system could still be used, although only fools and fishermen took the chance!) The fine new suspension bridge which now spans the river is really a memorial to the first builders, for it was erected on a site not far from that of the old, and used very much the same principles as had the older structure. So, as you travel across it in your car, you should perhaps tip your hat to the memory of the pioneers who made your trip possible. If you travel through the gorge on the Canadian National line you will see a notice board drawing your attention to the Alexandra Bridge. Don't believe everything it says, however, for this is not the Engineers' bridge, nor was it built, as the sign says, in 1858!

Had the government done nothing else in 1862, it would still have accomplished a great deal, for the construction of this wagon road from Yale to Lytton was a huge undertaking.

But the story of the road-building programme of 1862 is by no means yet complete. From Lytton at the end of the canyon road, or from Lillooet at the end of the Douglas road, there still stretched long miles to the Cariboo itself. Hence, even while the task of blasting a road through the rocks of the canyon was going on, work was started on the job of joining Lytton and Lillooet to each other and to the gold fields above.

In March of 1862 the first contract was let to Gustavus Blin Wright, one of the 1858 gold miners now turned engineer. By its terms Wright agreed to build a wagon road from a point across the Fraser from Lillooet up to the town of Alexandria, and to take his pay partly in cash advances and partly in toll privileges on the road. In April a similar arrangement was made with the firm of Charles Oppenheimer, Thomas Lewis, and Walter Moberley, which then undertook the task of constructing a twenty-four foot road from Lytton along the Thompson and up the Buonaparte valley to join Wright's project. This firm had some difficulties in performing its task. Among other things it was increasingly difficult now to keep its labourers digging a roadbed, when only a few miles away other men were digging for gold! As a result, the partners found it necessary to contract for the labour of Chinese coolies supplied by the enterprising firm of "Ho Hang and Ab Yep." Bad luck still dogged the company, however, and eventually its contract had to be completed by another contractor.

By the winter of 1863 Governor Douglas' road scheme had so far progressed that there were now two roads to the interior. To supplement the Douglas-Lillooet-road, now being used less and less as time went on, there was a fine wagon road extending from Yale at the head of steamboat navigation up through Spuzzum, and then from across the river through Boston Bar, Lytton, Cook's Ferry, and on to Clinton. This was the Junction City, for here the two routes joined, to run north again to meet the Fraser at Alexandria. From that point steamboat travel was again possible on the river as far north as the mouth of the Quesnel River; in fact, a steamer was

operating on that stretch even before the road was completed to Alexandria. The miner who thus reached the town of Quesnel, now had only a distance of some sixty miles between himself and the town of Richfield right in the centre of the diggings. But, as one of the miners has said, "Oh! those sixty miles!" The only existing trail ran through "a sea of mud, with a bottom composed of roots of trees." This same traveller relates that he spent sixteen days in covering the sixty miles to Williams Creek. Obviously here was the next task for the Department of Lands and Works.

In January of 1863 the department issued a public notice calling for tenders on the two projects not yet arranged, the wagon road from Alexandria to the mouth of the Quesnel River, and a similar road from that point to the mines. No satisfactory tenders were received so the ubiquitous Royal Engineers were once again called to the rescue, and by the summer of 1864 the work was complete. That same year work was begun on the construction of a wagon-road between Yale and Hope, to obviate the extremely difficult task of navigating the river steamboats over that dangerous stretch of water. (The *Umatilla* used to take five hours for the trip upstream to Yale, fifty minutes for the return to Hope!)

With the completion of this road the problem of communications was solved. At long last the golden road to Cariboo was open to the adventurer. But just as in the case of the old Douglas-Lillooet road, by the time construction was completed, traffic had already begun to dwindle away. The rich claims of the Cariboo had become permanent operations, conducted by firms which possessed the capital necessary for their full exploitation, and the tide of indigent and disappointed prospectors had begun to ebb away from the Cariboo. Gold still came from the mines, but it was not gold easily accessible to the individual gold-diggers. For the typical miner, owning little but the clothes on his back, his shovel and his pan, the promised land was not here.

For a brief moment or so during the spring of 1864, it looked as if El Dorado might still be in the territory of British

Columbia, even if not on the Fraser. On a little creek running into the Kootenay River near Fort Steele, a dozen miles or so north of today's Cranbrook, very rich pockets of free gold were found, and a rush of miners poured into the region from the south. But Stud Horse Creek (when officialdom had to name it, it became the much primmer Wild Horse Creek) very soon proved to be a flash in the pan, and the majority of those who flocked in did not even file claims.

Before that rush petered out another had begun. Hoping to open communications from the coast, a government party had been sent out from Kamloops to blaze a trail overland to the Kootenay strike. That party never reached Wild Horse Creek, for by the time it had cut the trail from the eastern end of Shuswap Lake over the divide and down to the Columbia, the excitement was all over. But down on the bars of the Columbia, in the stretch above Death Rapids on the Big Bend, the men of the working party themselves washed the gravel and had spectacular results. During the summer of 1865 and 1866 the Big Bend excitement ran high, and at one time there were 20,000 miners busy scratching for gold by one means or another.

During the summer of 1866 the government's Department of Public Works decided to extend its road building programme to this new region. Already a practicable road ran up the Thompson to Kamloops and now it was turned into a wagon road and extended from there to Savona's Ferry. A steamboat went into service in 1866 to carry miners and provisions up from Savona to the eastern end of Shuswap Lake. There a new town of some twenty houses sprang up in 1866, and the residents gave it the name of Seymour in honour of the new governor of British Columbia. But the road which should have connected Seymour to the Big Bend was never built, for the Big Bend Bubble burst in the fall of 1866. The free gold was soon washed and picked up and the rush away from the diggings began. The gold tide swept on northward, first to the Cassiar strikes and then to Alaska.

Before the Cariboo Highway through the canyon and up

the river settled down to its dull tasks as handmaiden to the respectable industries of the colony, it had, like the Douglas road, enjoyed a brief span of very exciting days. Its construction called not only for an incredible amount of labour, but for some amazingly bold experiments in engineering as well. In fact, there is enough of interest here to warrant a suggestion to the tourist. Leave your car at one of the viewpoints on the fine new paved highway north of the suspension bridge, and scramble down the rocky bank to the old road. You will find, at almost any place you happen to choose, examples of engineering skill that will astonish you. Over deep chasms you will see the remains of intricate log bridges, and around the face of sheer precipices you will find spots where the road was simply built against the cliff by the expedient of laying stone upon stone, all chipped to fit, until a level causeway was created. Reconstruct in your imagination the narrow road clinging to the rocky abutments and following their steep grades. Put yourself in a six-horse stage coach, and go rocketing around those curves and down those grades at top speed. Then you will have some idea of just what was done here.

Over this road went most of the men and women who lived to become the founders of a new Canadian province. Among them were some at least of the passengers from the famous "bride-ships" of 1862. Aghast at reports that in the Cariboo there were "over six thousand men and only three or four married women," such respectable individuals as the Bishop of Oxford and Lady Burdett-Coutts founded the British Columbia Emigration Society and through its agency arranged to send out to the colony in April of that year some twenty girls, carefully selected from orphan asylums in the London area. In June a further contingent left England aboard the *Tynemouth*. The scenes in Victoria when the ships docked must have been a little shocking to what the *Colonist* called "maidens meditating matrimony." Naturally, most of the maidens were snatched up immediately at Victoria, but some—let us hope not the least attractive—reached main-

land settlements. Some even got as far as the Cariboo, where they married and helped to found many of British Columbia's first families.

Over the road, too, and probably with much less respectable ambitions, went the famous "hurdy-gurdy girls" on their way to pursue their calling as "entertainers" in the saloons of Van Winkle, Barkerville and Cameron town. Whatever the truth of the nasty rumours which sometimes circulated about them, it is pleasant to report that many of them, also, captured husbands and "founded fine old families." Not all of them apparently deserved the strictures of the poet who complained of them that

The dollar was their only love,  
Which vexed the lads so sairly, oh!

The road was built, of course, for one purpose and one only—to serve the miners at its farther end. During its first few years, vast quantities of goods of all kinds, from pins to pianos, were transported northward. Most important of all, large quantities of gold were brought out over the new highway. How much gold we will probably never know, for those who struck it rich preferred to bring out their dust themselves, and if they were wise they did not talk too freely about the amounts they were carrying. But the firm of Wells-Fargo, through its agents at Victoria, shipped out gold to the value of more than \$6,500,000 during the period from 1858 to 1862, and in the single year of 1863 handled almost half that amount. Other firms, including the Hudson's Bay Company itself, shipped in the earlier period somewhere in the neighbourhood of another \$4,000,000, and in 1863 alone more than \$2,000,000. How much individual miners themselves brought out will never now be known.

Express companies offered their facilities to the miner who preferred to stay on his claim and to send out his gold. The first of them was that of the famous Billy Ballou, who put into operation in June of 1858 an express service, carrying parcels, letters, and gold. His first competitor, and the man

who by 1862 had driven him out of business, was Frank Barnard. On Barnard's first trip, incidentally, he carried letters to the gold field at the rate of \$2.00 each. And if his charge seems now exorbitant, let it be noted that he made the entire journey of over seven hundred miles on foot, with the express strapped on his back. Barnard's rise in the business world was rapid. In 1862 his service became a "pony express," making connections with Wells-Fargo at Victoria, and in 1863 it became the Cariboo Express, with fine wagons in service. The next year saw the first stage coach roll out of Yale on its way to Soda Creek. The B-X, as the company was usually known, offered fast service in fine fourteen-passenger coaches, drawn by teams of six horses which were changed every twelve or thirteen miles. The drivers, men such as Steve Tingley and the famous Billy Humphries, were the kings of the highway as they wheeled their vehicles up and down the road from Soda Creek to Yale. Good drivers they must have been, for the 400-mile journey took but four days. In general the express service was dependable for gold shipments, even though it must have been nerve-wracking for passengers, since each coach carried an iron safe, and upon the box beside the driver sat an armed guard.

Sometimes there were complaints about the service, for not all trips were uninterrupted. James Anderson, the Robbie Burns of the Cariboo, a man who was more successful at versifying than at gold-mining, wrote to his "friend Sawney" back home in Ayrshire about the B-X.

Your letter came by the Express  
Eight shillin's carriage—naethin less  
Ye'll think this awfu'—'tis, nae doot—  
(A dram's twa shillin's hereaboot)  
I'm sure if Tammie Ha'—the buddy,  
Was here wi' his three-legged cuddy  
He hauls ahint him wi' a tether,  
He'd beat the Express, faith, a' thegither.  
To speak o't in the truest way  
'Tis Barnard's Cariboo Delay.

The government of the colony took some responsibility for ensuring safe shipment of the hard-won Cariboo gold. In the summer of 1861, at Governor Douglas' order a troop of a dozen well-armed, well-mounted, and smartly uniformed men rode out of Douglas on the way to Lillooet, escorting wagons equipped with strong-boxes for the safe custody of the gold which it was hoped to bring down. Charges were very light—in fact the fee for the escort service was to be only one shilling per ounce for the whole trip down from Quesnel. The miners, however, refused to patronize the "gold escort," for the government refused either to guarantee safe delivery, or to accept any responsibility for loss. As a result, in its three trips the escort brought out less than \$50,000, collected about \$300 in fees, and cost over \$30,000 to operate. Small wonder that the troop was disbanded and the handsome uniforms regretfully laid away. Revived again in 1863 the escort made four trips on the new Cariboo Road from Yale to Barkerville and brought out some \$200,000 in gold. Still, however, the project failed to pay its own expenses, for the miners still refused in the main to use the service. Barnard's Express that same summer carried about four times as much gold as did the government escort.

The highways to the Cariboo during those early years saw many bizarre experiments in transportation. In May of 1862, for example, Frank Laumeister, packer and merchant of New Westminster, tried something new in North American transportation. Since it was well-known that a camel could pack at least twice as much as a mule, and since its forage requirements were much less, a train of these beasts should turn out to be a great success. Twenty-one of them were brought to New Westminster and put into service on the Douglas-Lillooet road. But the rocky surface of the Harrison Lake trail was never meant for a camel's tender feet, and the beasts themselves were almost as hard to handle as the mules and horses which went crazy whenever they smelled the camels approaching. After a year the experiment was sadly abandoned. Even disposing of the stock was a headache

for Laumeister, for the market for used camels was not at the moment very brisk! Eventually the last of them were simply turned loose in the sandy hills near Kamloops. And there occasionally they were still being seen more than forty years later!

The camel-train experiment was an attempt to use perhaps the oldest method of transportation known to man. At the other extreme surely was the attempt to put steam traction engines into operation on the canyon highway. In 1864 a company was floated in Victoria whose purpose was to buy steam engines in Glasgow and to instal them in carts for hauling goods. The company had financial difficulties, and it was not until 1870 that the first—and only—engine made its appearance. The "steam cart" managed to clank and wheeze only part of the way to the mines, for it stalled on the climb over Jackass Mountain in the lower canyon. (Many a Model T had the same trouble with the same climb at a much later date!) In any event, the trip was only a gesture now, for the need for such a new-fangled freighting device had passed away. The Cariboo Highway had already settled down to the task of providing the essential link between gold fields and the coast, and the stage coaches and freight wagons were able to serve all its needs.

F O U R T E E N

*Waddington's Folly*

IN PRECEDING chapters has been told the story of how British Columbia's two earliest roads were built. And if that story has not conveyed something of the courage and ingenuity of the pioneers, then it is only because it was badly told. More pathetic than glorious is the story of a road that was never built at all. We have seen that Alexander Mackenzie, the first white man to attempt to use the Fraser and its valley as a route to the sea, had finally decided that a direct overland jump to the coast was safer and easier. Now the reasons for Mackenzie's decision were just as valid in the 1860's as they had been in his day, and it is no wonder that some should still seek an easy road to the gold fields by doing what he did, in reverse. When you consider on the one hand the difficulties of construction and the expense of maintenance of the canyon road, and on the other hand the woefully inadequate nature of the Douglas Wagon Road, you will agree that it was inevitable that a third route would be sought. And even a cursory examination of a map of British Columbia will suggest now, as it did then, such an alternative route. As early as the summer of 1858, would-be miners in Victoria were writing letters to the *Gazette* urging the authorities to try to cut a trail between the upper Fraser valley and the coast. The maps of the coast show at least four or five inlets all extending deeply into the interior and all reasonably close to Victoria. A trail down to the head of one of these inlets would thus not only be shorter than that following the Fraser, but it would make for cheaper freight rates, since there would be a much longer haul by sea and a much shorter haul by

land than over the Fraser River roads. Lastly, and this was probably the most important consideration with the merchants and shippers of Victoria, shipment of goods through a port up the coast would mean that Victoria would continue to be the only permanent port of entry. On the other hand, if New Westminster became the port of entry, ocean vessels would soon be proceeding directly to it and Victoria might become simply a backwater. Here was the beginning of a beautiful rivalry, one that only ended when the citizens of both places came to hate Vancouver even more! For a variety of reasons then, schemes to push a road directly from the mines to the coast could always count on backers in Victoria.

The first attempt to find a practicable route was made in 1858 at the expense of the government, by a party headed by John McKay. The party started from the head of Lillooet Lake, on the Port Douglas-Lillooet trail and pushed westward to the head of Howe Sound by following the "Siakamish and Skowhomish valleys." This is the route now followed by the P.G.E. Railway, and if you have ever taken that inimitable railroad's run from Squamish at the head of the sound up the Cheakamus Canyon to the town of Pemberton, you will be following exactly the route they discovered. McKay's report on the feasibility of this trail was highly favourable. Perhaps his enthusiasm was due to the fact that he was going downhill. Going the other way the poor old locomotives of the P.G.E. have their trouble huffing and chuffing up the steep grades of this canyon. It is, in fact, just as bad as the Fraser Canyon, even though on a smaller scale. McKay's proposals could hardly be accepted, however, no matter how enthusiastic he was. The trail which he was advocating did not eliminate the necessity of handling goods several times on the Port Douglas-Lillooet trail above Pemberton, and was just as rough as anything in the Fraser canyon.

Early in the spring of 1859, a party headed by the famous Major William Downie tried a new line. They explored both Jervis Inlet and Desolation Sound and made a very favourable report to Governor Douglas. Downie told of conversations

with Indians who had told him that to build a road from the head of either inlet to the Fraser would not only be feasible, but relatively easy. Quite obviously the Indians understood easily what the white men wanted them to say, and, being polite, said it. At any rate Major Downie was convinced, and soon transferred his conviction and his interest to the people of Victoria.

Before anything could be done to implement Downie's schemes the excitement was over. The earnings from the bars of the river had already begun to dwindle and the exodus of miners was under way. In the chorus of disillusionment and disappointment which arose, one voice alone continued to sound a note of optimism about the riches of the Fraser mine. Alfred Waddington of Victoria, merchant and public leader in that city, seems to have been almost alone in his firm belief that the mines of the Fraser would one day live up to all the claims that had been advanced for them. So convinced was he that he published at his own expense a little book—the first ever printed in British Columbia—entitled *The Fraser Mines Vindicated*. And in 1861 when the news came of the strikes at Antler and William's Creeks, Waddington's faith, as well as the mines, seemed to be "vindicated."

Once again the possibility of a road from a point on the coast directly across the mountains into the new fields leaped into the minds of officials and into the columns of Victoria papers. In July of 1861 Governor Douglas commissioned Major Downie to outfit another expedition to explore possible sites for the terminus of such a road. Late in August that worthy was back in Victoria again—his surveys were always very speedy ones—and there he not only reported to the governor but addressed a public meeting as well. It was Downie's opinion that several routes, from several inlets were all perfectly practicable, each having special advantages and each certain drawbacks. Incidentally, according to Downie, the least attractive of the possible starting places was at the head of Bute Inlet.

By this time other expeditions were already out, most of

them outfitted at private expense. One such party, led by Ranald MacDonald and John Barnston, left Alexandria on the Fraser River on May 24, 1861, and reached the coast at the head of Bella Coola Inlet on June 19. The report of this party was highly favourable, but it nevertheless was obvious that the inlet to which they had come, since it lay north of the difficult navigation of Seymour Narrows and the Euclataw Rapids, might better be avoided. In spite of this drawback, in April of 1862, Ranald MacDonald secured an agreement with the government, through Colonel Moody, for the construction of a mule road from Bella Coola to the mouth of the Quesnel River, in return for the privilege of collecting a toll of three farthings per pound of merchandise and two shillings per head on all travellers.

MacDonald's company was never formed, and his road never built. In fact, it may be that the whole thing was never more than a wild idea. If so, it was not nearly so bizarre as some of the other ideas which he had in his lifetime already proposed and carried out. Ranald MacDonald's story is perhaps the most romantic of all the romantic stories of the pioneers. Born in Astoria during the days when that post was still the centre of the Nor-Wester trade, he was the son of Archibald McDonald (his father used this spelling) and the beautiful Princess Sunday, youngest daughter of the old King Comcomly. After the death of his Indian wife, the father, now Chief Trader at Fort Langley, married again, this time to a white woman. Contrary to the usual practice, young Ranald's step-mother tried to give him the best of upbringing, even finally having him sent east to Canada to enter a boys' school. The wilder half of young MacDonald's breeding must have been the stronger half. At any rate, at the age of thirteen he ran away from his school, made his way to Boston, and shipped as cabin boy on a ship bound for China. In 1848 he was serving aboard a whaler in waters off the Japanese islands. The shores of those islands were forbidden territory at that time, and almost certain death awaited the white sailor unfortunate enough to be ship-wrecked on them. MacDonald was

moved by some mad impulse and persuaded his skipper to set him adrift in a small boat a few miles from land. He was seized by a group of native fishermen as soon as he landed, and handled very roughly at first. Somehow or other he was able to convince them that he was worth something for eventually he was taken to the court of the Shogun. The usual fate of white sailors in this predicament was summary execution, but once again young MacDonald was given special treatment. As a matter of fact, within a few months he was acting as tutor in the court, and was giving English lessons to some fourteen young sons of noble families. Since he spoke no Japanese, and they no English, his methods must have been rather unusual. But teach them he did, for when Commander Perry of the U.S. Navy arrived in 1857 to "open up" Japan, the official interpreter during the negotiations was one of MacDonald's former pupils.

For a man who had faced such problems as these the mere floating of a company to build a road should have been child's play. But in the field of finance he seems to have been less accomplished than in that of linguistics. He found it not only difficult to attract shareholders, but impossible to get along with those he did find, and as a result his contract lapsed. MacDonald himself finally found a kind of security—let us hope that is what he wanted—operating a ferry across the Fraser at Lillooet.

In the meantime, better fortune awaited another project undertaken at about the same time. In June of 1861, a public meeting of citizens of Victoria held in Moore's Hall, heard an eloquent address by Alfred Waddington urging the advisability of once more considering the possibility of a road from the coast directly to the new fields. It was Waddington's opinion, incidentally, that Bute Inlet was the logical starting point for such a road. As a result of his enthusiasm, a committee of prominent citizens was appointed to plan an expedition up the coast to re-examine that inlet and to make a tentative survey inland. The reports of this party were very encouraging. As a result, Waddington and his associates

quickly formed a corporation and were given a contract to begin construction in the spring of 1862. The road was to be a wagon road, sixteen feet in width, and was to run from the head of Bute Inlet to the point where the Chilcotin flows into the Fraser. Two days after the contract was signed, the first gang of workmen arrived at the scene to begin the job. The first task, of course, was to cover the whole route and make the necessary surveys, and a party under Henry Teidemann set off at once. Perhaps it was significant that this party, after reaching the Fraser returned to Victoria by way of the Douglas Lillooet Road. Certainly it is significant that immediately after the surveyors had reported to Waddington he applied for an extension of the time limit on his contract!

Nothing more was done while Waddington was negotiating with the government. As a matter of fact, since the company had not yet succeeded in selling all its stock, probably nothing could be done. Finally, in November of 1863, the amended contract was drafted and signed. Waddington naturally was highly incensed at the delay and expressed his resentment in no uncertain terms in letters to the Colonial Secretary. But delay and disagreement among government officials were to be the least of Waddington's difficulties. The first summer saw heavy rains and high water in the Homathco River which greatly hindered the work crews. On several occasions bridges were no sooner finished than they were destroyed by fires of mysterious origin. But most of all, the rugged nature of the country, particularly along the canyons of the Homathco, presented a staggering task for a road-builder, particularly an amateur at the game. A heavy snowfall in November closed down all work, and when spring came the financial difficulties of Waddington's firm seriously curtailed its 1863 operations. By the fall of that year, however, a bridle trail existed over practically the whole route. Of course, Waddington's charter had called for the provision of a wagon road, not a trail, and as a consequence, the merchant-builder was as yet not legally entitled to the collection of tolls. To ease his financial difficulties Waddington was finally granted the right to the collection

of a provisional toll on those who might use the trail. There was, however, practically no traffic over the trail that year, and hence practically no revenue. More important than the provisional toll from Waddington's point of view was the fact that he was at the same time granted another year's extension on his contract. As a direct result, he was at last successful in selling enough stock in his company to ensure its continued operation.

During the season of 1863, although work was pushed ahead, the project itself lost ground. Fall freshets carried away most of the forty-odd bridges which had been constructed, and the sudden early closing in of winter made it impossible even to begin repairs. In April of 1864 the working parties again returned. This time, in spite of the fact that wrecked bridges and a ruined road lay before them, Waddington was more optimistic than ever. At last he had capital in the necessary amounts, lots were already being sold in the townsite laid out at the head of Bute Inlet and enough men had been hired so that it was possible to send a second work gang up to the head of Bentinck Arm and thence overland to Puntzeen (now Puntze) Lake to work back along the trail.

Just as the tide of fortune seemed to turn in his favour, the final disaster struck. In May of 1864 occurred the famous Chilcotin massacres. The thievish nature of the Indians of that tribe already had caused the road crews much trouble; now it was to bring death to many of the builders and ruin to all of Alfred Waddington's great ambitions. From evidence given afterwards at the trial of the suspects, the tragic story can be pieced together. Two Chilcotin Indians, it appears, approached a ferryman in Waddington's employ on the Homathco River, with the usual request for food. When the ferryman refused, one of the Indians shot and killed him. That night the tribe attacked the main gang in its camp. Out of sixteen men in the crew, thirteen were killed. The road boss, George Brewster, was up river with a survey crew; they were attacked the next day and three of the five were killed.

When the survivors reached the coast, word of the

massacre was sent to Victoria. Retribution was prompt. On June 13 a volunteer force from New Westminster and Victoria sailed on *H.M.S. Sutlej*, under the command of Governor Seymour himself. This force travelled overland from the head of Bentinck Arm and effected a junction with a force of miners recruited in the Cariboo and led by Judge Cox. The show of such force was sufficient to quell the disturbance. Eight leaders of the Chilcotin tribe were arrested and brought to justice, and five of them were convicted and hanged. It is highly possible that the real culprits were never apprehended, and that in fact the tribe had simply offered a number of convenient scapegoats. Still in the eyes of the law justice had been done, and the incident was closed. British Columbia's first—and only—Indian war was over.

Alfred Waddington himself knew now that his company was ruined, and even before the trial of the Chilcotin Indian leaders, he was attempting to salvage something out of the wreck of his schemes. In a letter to the Colonial Secretary he proposed to surrender his contract, under which he had until December of 1866 to complete the road, and proposed an indemnity of \$100,000 as his compensation for the work already done. When that was refused, Waddington applied for government protection on the road for the crews which he proposed to hire to finish the job. Even if his request had been granted it is doubtful if he could have secured either a crew or the financial backing to enable him to go on with his task.

Alfred Waddington was not one to be easily dissuaded from a plan which apparently had come to be his whole life. In May of the following year he made formal application to the Secretary of State for revision of his case, and accompanied his letter with a copy of a petition signed by over a thousand citizens of Victoria, asking for the re-opening of the Bute Inlet road. The answer to his request was firm and final. The government would agree to no payment of indemnity for his work, and would give no encouragement in an undertaking which had "led to such lamentable results." Waddington's

career as engineer and empire-builder was over. In June of 1866 he was consigned to the limbo of disappointed ministers and discarded statesmen, when he was appointed Superintendent of Education for Vancouver Island.

But Waddington was still not beaten. In 1867 we find him proposing the construction of a "steam traction road" over the route he had surveyed, with the view that eventually it might become the roadbed for a railroad. Still the answer of the government was flatly in the negative. Railroads were in everyone's mind by this time, but Bute Inlet and the Chilcotin route was no place for one! That route, in fact, "ran through nothing and ended nowhere." Five years later Waddington was in Ottawa trying to float a company to build the transcontinental railroad. And guess what route he was proposing!

Today all that remains of Alfred Waddington's road is a rough trail up the Homathco and down the Chilcotin to the Fraser, a trail that is but a faint reminder of the commercial highway so long dreamed of by the scholarly Victoria grocer. The town of Port Waddington at the head of Bute Inlet still exists as a memorial to the memory of this man—a memorial which is perhaps not an adequate one, for Alfred Waddington perhaps best of all exemplifies the qualities of faith and grim determination which are the hallmark of pioneers everywhere. Waddington was probably the least successful of all the well-known gold rush figures. Not only did his great undertakings fail; he was even a failure as a civil servant, and before his death his friends had to come to his financial rescue often. Perhaps his failures were inevitable. Over fifty years of age when he came to Victoria, he was by that time a sickly man. His only training was that of a grocer, and his real vocation was that of scholar. If this was a handicap he had overcome it, for in 1860 he occupied an eminently respectable position in Victoria as a successful merchant. Alfred Waddington was probably the most reckless gambler of them all, for he staked everything he possessed on a dream, and lost.

F I F T E E N

*The Overlanders*

DURING the first excitement following the discovery of gold on the Fraser River there were those who tried to reach the new strike by travelling overland across the plains and through the mountains. Fabulous wealth should have been the reward for anyone who made *that* trip! Instead, of course, there was the disappointment and disillusionment of 1859 and 1860. With the new strikes of 1861 on the Cariboo creeks, the gold excitement in Eastern Canada and in Britain revived once more. So too did interest in the possibility of an overland route to the Cariboo fields. Numerous parties were organized in 1861, and late that year the British Columbia Overland Transit Company was advertising in British newspapers that it was arranging transportation facilities to the Cariboo mines. According to the advertisements, "palatial" steamships would carry its customers to the port of Quebec. From that point they would be transported to St. Paul in "comfortable" railway cars, and from St. Paul by way of the Red River settlements all the way to the gold fields by stage coach! It would be charitable to assume that the company was founded on ignorance rather than fraud. Certainly one or the other was evident, for the advertisements described this as "the speediest, safest and most economical route to the gold diggings, through a country unequalled for its beauty and the salubrity of its climate."

How many were enticed to the Cariboo by these advertisements will never be known. Of those who came from Britain, or the eastern states, or from Canada, a large majority must

have been discouraged enough when they reached St. Paul to turn back home again. For there was no stage route to Cariboo, nor even one to the Red River Settlements. In the Dakotas and in Minnesota the Sioux Indians were on the war-path and wild tales were circulating in St. Paul of the massacres which had taken place. But the disappointments and the dangers were not sufficient to turn everyone back. There were a few, at least, brave enough or foolhardy enough, to press on. From St. Paul they travelled north to the Red River, and thence down that sluggish stream to Fort Garry, the settlement at the junction with the Assiniboine. Some of them, incidentally, were fortunate enough to secure passage on a little steamer, the *International*, which was making its maiden voyage on the river from a point south of the present international boundary to the site of the present Winnipeg.

By the beginning of June, 1862, a large party had congregated at Fort Garry, and its leaders were busy making plans for the trip across the plains. From the two or three independent traders, and from the Bay post, the Overlanders could buy supplies such as hardware, ammunition and blankets, while from the Indians they could obtain the ubiquitous pemmican at sixteen cents per pound. To transport the company and its goods there was nothing better than the Red River carts which they either bought or built. These famous two-wheeled vehicles were made entirely of wood, with neither bolts nor nails in them, with entirely hand shaped wheels, and the whole put together with wooden pegs. They were to serve the Overlanders well.

On June 5, 1862, the party left Fort Garry, after receiving a blessing, good wishes, and a very long sermon from the Reverend John Black, the new Presbyterian missionary to the Red River. One hundred and thirty-eight men, two women, one of whom was pregnant, and two children, made up the complement. They were organized into eight different sections each under an elected leader, and the whole was under the command of the elected captain of the expedition, Thomas McMicking of Queenston.

Their route from Fort Garry to the mountains followed closely the path taken by the smaller parties which had preceded them in 1858 and 1859. From the Red River the trail followed the Assiniboine, then north to the South Saskatchewan and westward along its banks. Favoured by beautiful weather and ideal trail conditions, the road across the prairies was a relatively pleasant one. Although the ox-carts travelled slowly, they travelled for about eighteen of every twenty-four hours, so that forty to fifty miles could be covered in a day. There were difficulties, of course. For example, in one three-day period the expedition had to cross no fewer than eight streams, all too deep to ford. Usually the technique employed was to fell two long trees into the river, criss-cross them with smaller logs and branches and use the whole either as a raft or as a pontoon bridge.

On July 21 the expedition reached the Hudson's Bay Company establishment at Fort Edmonton. Here a few days' rest awaited the women and children at least, while the men of the party busied themselves in securing horses and mules, and repacking supplies, for even the "greenhorns" knew that the Red River cart was no vehicle for the journey which now lay ahead. Before the end of the month, their supplies now lashed on the backs of their animals, or up on the *travois* which the Indians showed them how to use, the Overlanders struck north from Edmonton. Westward along the Athabasca River the trail ran through country growing every day wilder and more forbidding. By August 20 they were deep in the mountains near Jasper House, and very close to the spot where the famous Jasper Park Lodge now stands. Already they had met dangers and difficulties enough. Fallen trees, precipitous hills, acres of muskeg swamp, rushing streams, all lay behind them. But ahead of them still lay the snow-topped rampart of the great Rockies. We are told that when the Overlanders had first caught sight of the tips of the Rockies, on August 15, men, women and children alike had lifted their voices in a cheer! A day or so later there was very little cheering to be done.

Following the route now taken by the swift trains of the Canadian National Railroad, the Overlanders pushed on through the Tete Jaune Pass. There was no fine, level right of way along the north bank of the Athabasca then. Instead the Overlanders had to creep along the steep sides of the pass, zigzagging up and down the densely wooded slopes to avoid rockfalls, or precipitous slides, or the many brawling mountain streams which come slashing down the mountain side every few miles. At noon on August 22, the party was stopped on the shore of a swampy little lake set right in the centre of a maze of jagged mountain peaks. Food supplies were almost exhausted, and so too were the travellers. And the spectre of an early winter haunted everyone's waking hours. Then someone noticed that the waters of the lake where they were encamped drained not to the east, but to the west! The meaning was clear. At long long last they were over the Divide, and the water of the lake on whose shore they were standing (it was Moose Lake of today) would eventually drain to the sea. Spirits rose high once more, and next day, with renewed vigour they were on their way west again.

Although the Overlanders were now at the headwaters of the Fraser their problems were not solved yet. For the Fraser flows from its source in Moose Lake not westward at all but almost due north. Indians whom they met explained to the whites that the river here was beginning its long northward reach before it makes its "big bend" and then sweeps south along the course which MacKenzie and Fraser had followed. They explained, too, by means of drawing upon the earth, that if the whites struck west instead, over still another height of land, they would come down upon another river, the Thompson, which would take them directly to the land of their desire.

The once unified expedition had already begun to split into smaller groups, partly because of natural straggling, and partly because it was easier to hunt for food for a smaller party. Now it was decided to separate for the final dash to the Cariboo. One group of a score or more men and one of the

two women, with her two small children, elected to try the overland path to the Thompson. A week after leaving the Fraser they were in such wild country that their horses and oxen were simply liabilities, and the animals were either slaughtered or abandoned. When they reached the banks of the Clearwater they built crude rafts and launched themselves on its swift waters. Progress was faster now but by no means safer! One incident will serve as an illustration of their dangers. In a particularly vicious rapid one of the rafts ran up upon a rock and stuck fast squarely in the middle of the torrent. For two days its occupants were stranded in this frightening position. Then a hardy soul from one of the other rafts tried a desperate gamble. Borrowing an Indian's canoe he took a line from shore and shot the rapid again, this time steering as close as he could to the stranded raft. As he skimmed by he was able to throw his line to the drenched and shivering men aboard. Then, with all available hands pulling from the shore, the raft was hauled off its precarious perch and down through the rapids.

When the party reached the Thompson they had had enough of river travel. In fact, rather than face its rapids, they walked the last hundred miles to Kamloops. At long last, exhausted and starving, they reached the safety of the Hudson's Bay post just as the first heavy snow fell. And then and there, as if to put period to the story of the journey, Mrs. Shubert, the lone woman member of the company, proceeded to have her baby—thirty-six hours after reaching the fort!

The rest of the Overlanders had experiences every bit as exciting. Preferring the longer but supposedly safer journey around the big bend of the Fraser, the remaining members of the original band decided to organize into four groups. Each group set itself the task of constructing a raft upon which the few remaining oxen and horses as well as the heavy supplies could be freighted. Each raft, incidentally, was equipped with a fireplace laid upon flat stones, with a low railing all around, and with shelters at the stern. It was September before these rather elaborate preparations were completed, and

no time was lost in any formal ceremony of launching. Early on the morning of September 4, first the *Scarborough*, then the *Ottawa*, the *Niagara* and the *Huntingdon*, each escorted by a little fleet of canoes, began the long perilous journey down the river.

Through rapids and torrents, down canyons where the water runs so fast that it "glasses over," the clumsy rafts came through to Fort George in just one week. But what a week! One young man, one of those who had been enticed from England by the advertisements of the British Columbia Overland Transit Company, was carried into the fort and died a few moments later from exposure and exhaustion. Seven others had lost their lives in the waters above, for although the rafts came through the rapids relatively undamaged, the frail canoes were often smashed and upset. At one of the innumerable "Grand Canyons" along the way, nine canoes were wrecked in one day. In one of them was a young man from Toronto named Carpenter. Before trying the descent Carpenter had insisted on removing his coat and hanging it upon a branch on shore. Then he entered the canoe with his partner, another Toronto man named Alexander, to shoot the rapid. Half-way down a rock ripped out the bottom of the tiny craft and both its occupants went under. Alexander finally won ashore below the canyon, but Carpenter's body was never seen again. In the pocket of the coat which he had insisted on leaving behind was a note addressed to his wife and child in Toronto, with the message, "Arrived at Grand Canyon. Ran the canyon and was drowned." Imagine what a present-day psychologist could do with *that* story!

The experiences of these men and women in pushing overland to the gold fields were hardly the kind which would popularize the route. At any rate, no overlander ever went back east by the way he had come out! As other smaller parties came straggling into Cariboo after coming down the Fraser by raft, or over the mountains to the Thompson, the conviction grew that there was still only one way to get to the gold mines. And that was the long way around to the river

mouth and then up the long and wearisome—but safe—Cariboo road.

None of the Overlanders made fortunes in the gold-fields. In fact, few of them even remained in British Columbia. Nevertheless, they deserve a more honoured place than the historians have been willing to give them. Their story has several times been told, but always with more sentiment than exactness, and always with the emphasis upon the pathetic and the pitiful. The Overlanders deserve better than that; far better than most they exemplified the toughness and the dogged perseverance which finally made British Columbia.

The route which they pioneered was followed by very few others. In 1862 and 1863 three separate expeditions came through Edmonton on their way through the Yellowhead Pass, but after that time there were no others. One of the 1862 expeditions was that of two young and adventurous Englishmen. The leader was Viscount Milton, the twenty-three year old son and heir of Earl Fitzwilliam, a young man who came to the western prairies for the second time in June of 1862. (His first trip, two years before, was "to have a pop at the buffalo," and the second was, apparently, to "have a pop" at the new gold-fields). With the young nobleman came an equally young doctor, Walter Cheadle, friend and medical adviser, for Viscount Milton suffered from epilepsy. By the time the two youthful adventurers reached the Rockies they had accumulated quite a family. In addition to Baptiste, their guide, they had picked up along the road a French half-breed, usually known simply as "the Assiniboine," his wife, his thirteen-year-old son, and a sixty-year-old ex-schoolmaster named O'Byrne, whose sole claim upon the party was apparently that he, like Cheadle, was a Cambridge man. When camp was struck at night Mr. O'Byrne was never available for any of the duties. Instead he always wandered off to smoke his pipe and read Paley's *Evidences of Christianity*. Together but not always in perfect harmony the epileptic viscount, the brand new doctor, the aging and indolent philosopher, and

the half-breed family, staggered through the passes and down the Thompson valley to Kamloops.

The overland route to the gold-fields was never a well-travelled road. In part at least this was simply because the gold excitement had died down before the best passes through the mountains had even been discovered. There was little need apparently, for a few years at least, to look for new roads. In fact, the railway, it was confidently expected, would soon make a mere road unnecessary. In the meantime the new colony out on the coast would have to wait until the great issue of Confederation should be settled. By the late sixties the problems of British Columbia had become political rather than geographic, and its need was consolidation and organization rather than further expansion or exploitation. Everyone in the colony, and this means everyone on Vancouver Island as well as the mainland, for the two were joined formally in 1866, was still firmly convinced that the prime need was to open communications with the east through the mountains. But would it be as a part of a British federation, or would it be the final act in the realization of the manifest destiny of the United States? The issue was between "confederation" and "annexation" and it was already being hotly debated.

S I X T E E N

*The Founding Fathers—and a Mother  
or Two*

THE REAL STORY of the founding of British Columbia is, of course, not the one which tells of its discovery or of its exploration, or even of the establishment of government and law and the complex machinery of modern living. The real story is that of the pioneers themselves. About the men and women who first came to British Columbia not nearly enough has yet been said. For example, pages and pages have been written describing the establishment of law in the new colony, but the whole story could probably better be told by a few words about the chief law enforcer, Judge Matthew Baillie Begbie, and a few more about one of the best-known law-breakers, the notorious Ned McGowan.

Begbie is a delightful figure for the historian to study. Thirty-nine years of age when appointed, he had practised law in England with some success before taking on his new tasks as Judge in the new colony. When he died in 1894 at the age of seventy-five he was still on the bench, and still as fiery and as mercurial as the day he arrived in the colony. His instructions to juries (the institution of the jury was the cross which Begbie had to bear) were often most unorthodox, and practically always lacking in magisterial dignity. On one occasion a man called Gilchrist, already under indictment for murder in California, was being tried in Begbie's court on the charge of killing and robbing another miner. The verdict of the jury was that the accused was guilty, but only of man-

slaughter. Apparently the evidence hardly warranted such leniency, for the judge addressed to Gilchrist and the jury some very pointed remarks. To the prisoner, he roared, "You deserve to be hanged! Had the jury performed their duty I would have had the painful satisfaction of condemning you to death!" Then he turned to the jury. "And you, gentlemen of the jury, you are a pack of Dalles Horse-thieves! Permit me to say it would give me great pleasure to see *you* hanged, each and every one of you, for declaring a murderer guilty of manslaughter!" Under the circumstances it is pleasant to report that the prisoner Gilchrist, after serving three years of his sentence, was pardoned because of the part which he played in preventing a wholesale break from the New Westminster penitentiary, and that he returned to California where eventually he died, full of years and honour, having served long and faithfully as a warden at San Quentin penitentiary!

On another famous occasion Judge Begbie was presiding at the trial of a well-known scoundrel accused at the moment of sandbagging and killing another man in a drunken brawl in Victoria. Begbie's charge to the jury was nothing less than a blunt instruction to find the accused guilty of wilful murder. When the jurors returned, however, their foreman reported the verdict "guilty of manslaughter." The judge was appalled, but quickly recovered himself and addressed the prisoner.

The jury in their infinite wisdom have declared that you are not guilty of sandbagging the deceased. In return for this I would simply state that you would do me an inestimable favour if, after leaving this courthouse, you would sandbag each and every one of the jury, and see that no one escapes!

With all his testiness on the bench Begbie was still, by any standards of jurisprudence, probably a very good judge. Not because of his knowledge of law, obviously, because he once told a friend that he "never looked at statutes! They muddled things too much!" His fine judicial mind, however, soon won for him something of the reputation of a new Solomon. Called upon to hand down a decision in the case of a dispute between

two brothers over the division of the farm left to them by their deceased father, Begbie's decision was masterly. "You, James," he directed the older brother, "will divide the property into parts as equal as you can make them. Then you, John, will have first choice!"

For a month or so after Judge Begbie's arrival in British Columbia, the infant colony was in the queer position of having a bench but practically no bar, for one of his first actions was to draft a series of regulations governing pleading before the new courts. His regulations might have done well in London, or in Toronto, but not here in British Columbia. In fact, they disqualified all but one of those who were already practising in either Vancouver Island or on the mainland, since no one could appear to plead before the court unless he had a degree in law from a British university, or had already been entitled to practise in Britain. Even Begbie soon saw that this was too severe a limitation, and the regulations were soon amended to permit practise by any "person of good repute" who had already practised in any part of the British Dominions, or in any of the United States. Since then the province has never lacked for lawyers.

Early in 1859, Governor Douglas gave Judge Begbie the necessary assistants on the provincial bench by appointing a number of so-called "Stipendiary Magistrates." They were a little more than magistrates, however, for they also had to perform, each in his own district, the functions of Gold Commissioner, Commissioner of Lands, Collector of Revenue, and, last but not least, Coroner. None of the appointees seems to have been trained at law, but it is to be hoped that all of them showed the same fine judicial quality of "Judge" Ball, the magistrate at Lytton. During the hearing of one case before him, and while the jury was deliberating its verdict, the sheriff came to Ball to inform him that one of the jurors was demanding a glass of water. Now court rules provided that the jury should have neither food nor drink brought in to them except at stated intervals. However, after some consideration, the magistrate gave his ruling. "Water! . . . Well,

it isn't food, that's sure . . . And I'm damned if you can call it a drink! Let him have it, sheriff!"

The situation which Judge Begbie and his officers had to face was a situation which might very well have been a dangerous one. After all, the vast majority of the men who poured into the colony between 1858 and 1862 were men who had little respect for the law. In fact, coming as most of them did, from California, they probably had very little experience with it either! But whatever the reason—whether respect for the British law, or more simply respect for Governor Douglas, Judge Begbie and all that they stood for—the fact is that there was never any very serious danger of anarchy or lawlessness in British Columbia. No vigilantes were ever organized here, nor were they ever needed. There were crimes, of course, and there were occasions when individuals took the law in their own hands. For example, two Californians, stranded in Victoria in September of 1858, became involved in an argument which developed into a fight, which in turn led to the arranging of a duel. Early the next morning the two principals and a crowd of onlookers met at the Hudson's Bay fort and then walked together out along Vancouver Street to the woods. When they agreed that they had gone far enough, they separated, marched off ten paces in opposite directions and then opened fire upon one another. One of the men, Johnnie Collins by name, fell mortally wounded. The other (Tip the Boatman was his only identification) did not wait to boast of his prowess, but fled by canoe that same night to Port Townsend in American territory.

One other duel was almost fought in New Westminster. Two stalwart and very drunk Kentuckians agreed to a duel to be fought on the main street of that town. Each chose his own weapons, and a space was cleared for the two combatants, one armed with a pistol, the other with a shot-gun. Eye-witness reports differ about the actual events, but the duelists were either too drunk to hit one another, or too drunk even to fire at one another. In any event no one was hurt.

The one occasion on which the forces of law and order were seriously challenged was the occasion of the comic-opera "Ned McGowan War." One of the richer bars on the lower Fraser was Hill's Bar, a mile or so below Yale. Upon it were established by the fall of 1858 a crew of hard-bitten Californians. Chief among them was one Ned McGowan, a man whose reputation as a "hard" man had preceded him to the Fraser. Wanted by the authorities in Pennsylvania, McGowan had fled to California in 1849. There he soon became involved with the law again, and in 1857 was tried on the charge of being an accessory in a murder case. The jury acquitted him on a technicality but in the eyes of the vigilantes McGowan was guilty as charged, and his parting gift from them was a bullet fired at him from the dock as he boarded ship for the Fraser diggings.

For several months McGowan was merely another miner, and apparently just as quiet and as law-abiding as any other on Hill's Bar. Christmas Day, however, brought an incident which apparently aroused his normal antipathy to law and order once more. During the celebrations necessary to observe fittingly the day of peace and goodwill to all men, a Hill's Bar miner named Farrell, while drinking in a saloon up river at Yale, attacked and beat up the negro bartender. Upon complaint of the negro the newly appointed magistrate of Yale, Mr. Whannell, issued a warrant for Farrell's arrest. Since by this time the culprit had returned to Hill's Bar the warrant was sent after him. Now the local magistrate at Hill's Bar, Mr. George Perrier, was very sensitive on the matter of infringement upon his jurisdiction, and not only refused to recognize Whannell's warrant, but issued one himself, this time for the arrest of the negro, and on the complaint of Farrell. This warrant was entrusted to Henry Hickson, the "constable" at Hill's Bar, for execution. That worthy, after properly fortifying himself at the saloon, proceeded directly to Yale and into Mr. Whannell's court to execute his warrant. Of course, Mr. Whannell, no less sensitive about *his* jurisdiction, and about the dignity of *his*

court, had Hickson thrown into the lock-up on a charge of contempt of court.

Back at Hill's Bar the news of this "outrage" brought a declaration of war. Mr. Perrier now issued a new warrant, this time for the arrest of Magistrate Whannell, likewise on a charge of contempt of court! This second warrant was taken to Yale for execution, not by another constable, but by a fully armed posse led by none other than the notorious Ned McGowan. Proceeding to Yale, McGowan and his crew terrorized the town, broke up a session of Magistrate Whannell's court, and "arrested" the magistrate. Then they proceeded down to the jail, broke it open, and released their fellow citizen, Hickson. Full of righteous satisfaction and stolen liquor, they then returned to Hill's Bar in great glee. Next day Whannell was haled before Perrier, found guilty of contempt, and fined \$50.00. Ned McGowan was now firmly in the saddle and ready to run Hill's Bar. As evidence of his authority the new boss now beat up and drove out of the camp the one man there who had been associated with the San Francisco vigilantes.

The whole episode had followed very much the pattern of a Gilbert and Sullivan plot. Governor Douglas, however, was not amused by it and took immediate action. A detachment of sailors and marines from Esquimault moved up the river to Langley to act as support for Captain Grant's company of Royal Engineers which had proceeded direct to the scene of the trouble. A couple of days later, the majesty of the law arrived, in the person of Judge Begbie, and he began a formal inquiry into the whole affair. Magistrate Perrier and his constable were dismissed, Mr. Whannell released, and McGowan himself fined for his part in the affray. With this prompt action, it is pleasant to relate, the whole Ned McGowan War came to a conclusion not only honourable but amicable. Immediately after Judge Begbie had handed down his decisions in the case he was invited to a "collation" in McGowan's shack. And after the collation he was shown over the diggings by his host, the former desperado. Thus

pleasantly and politely ended this one attempt at private war and vigilante law in British Columbia.

Perhaps the really important people among the pioneers of the new province were not the governing officials, and not the celebrated criminals, but rather the solid citizens who very soon formed the core of the body politic, the merchants, the packers, the professional men and the tradesmen. But even the bourgeoisie of these early years seemed to have a certain verve and colour of its own. Billy Ballou, for example, was a business man. It was he who established the first express agency in British Columbia in June of 1858, and for a few months he had a monopoly of the traffic. During those months he must have made a lot of money, but if the stories which are still told of his generosity to anyone with a hard luck story are all true, then Billy Ballou gave it all away again.

One rather frail looking young digger who arrived at Yale in the spring of 1859 was very obviously "down on his luck." Broke and starving, the young miner was rescued by Ballou and given a job in his Yale office. Only when a sudden attack of pneumonia laid the new clerk low was it discovered that for several months a woman had been running the office! Then her whole story came out, and it was a tragic one. Her young husband had come to the Fraser preceding spring and started up the canyon route. Before he ever reached the diggings he met the fate which awaited scores, for he was drowned while tow-lining through a gorge. When she failed to hear from him the young wife decided to come and look for him. Knowing the circumstances into which she was going, for fairly obvious reasons she decided to masquerade as just another gold-seeker, and to follow her husband's track into the interior. When the whole story was unfolded, Billy Ballou made the rounds of the saloons in Yale and quickly raised enough cash not only to provide care for his clerk, but to provide passage home to Boston as well. It would be pleasant to report that the kind-hearted expressman prospered because of his generosity, but unfortunately,

perhaps inevitably, he did not. In fact, he retired from business in 1862 with an empty purse, a broken constitution, and the good wishes of hundreds.

A happier story could be told of others, of Tom Cunningham, for example, who arrived at New Westminster in July of 1859. While bolder men were scrambling to get to the gold-fields above, he had a more cautious plan. Most of his cash he invested in small wares such as needles, flints, and thread. With a ninety pound stock in a pack upon his back, Cunningham then walked the four hundred miles from Port Douglas to the Cariboo mines. There he sold the contents of his pack at a handsome profit, and after a very brief try at digging, returned to the new town of New Westminster. With the proceeds of his first venture Cunningham now set himself up as a hardware merchant in that town. Very soon he was not only the town's merchant prince but its most extensive land holder as well. If all the stories about him are true he was a little less than a philanthropist in his business dealings, but he was the donor of the ground upon which Pelham Gardens, the town's first "park and botanical grounds" were established. He was one of the founders of the "Royal Agricultural and Industrial Society," and the man whose gift of \$500.00 a year for three years made possible the maintenance of a Methodist mission in the Cariboo during the lean period after 1864 when the mines apparently were "petering out."

The man who was selected to fill that mission post was not the least interesting of the pioneer church men. The Reverend Thomas Derrick was an early example of those "athletic Christians" who seemed to fill so many pulpits during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Mr. Derrick, in fact, was so keen on keeping in condition that on his way to the Cariboo he startled the driver of the stage coach by jumping off occasionally and running ahead for a mile or so. Sad to relate, one of his little conditioning gallops led to a most embarrassing accident. Just below Ashcroft the road forked, one branch turning north towards the town, the other

running straight ahead towards Kamloops and the trail to the Big Bend mines. Poor Mr. Derrick took the road running straight ahead and the coach coming behind him turned into Ashcroft. With lofty unconcern for "the dam-fool parson," the driver of the coach refused to wait longer than the normal time at the Ashcroft stop. Promptly on time the coach rolled on north, and without the reverend gentleman. Reporting the incident the *Cariboo Sentinel* at Barkerville remarked, "The preacher was coming here to tell us the way to Heaven, and got lost on the way to Cariboo!"

There were churchmen who were even earlier in the field than Mr. Derrick, and perhaps not quite so inept in their coming. In 1838 Fathers Demers and Blanchet left St. Boniface, crossed the plains with the Hudson's Bay brigade, and came into the Oregon territory to serve the needs of its people. The first mass to be celebrated in British Columbia was at their camp on the Big Bend north of the present location of Revelstoke. The rapids there were named Priest Rapids by the Indians in honour of the event. It was Father Demers who in 1841 held the first formal church service in what is now western British Columbia when in that year he paid a visit to the new post at Fort Langley and baptized at once over 350 persons. Up and down through both Oregon and New Caledonia Father Demers pursued his mission indefatigably, covering a parish which extended from Fort St. James to Fort Vancouver, travelling by dog team, on horseback, by canoe and bateau, building churches, instructing converts, and "baptizing, baptizing, baptizing!" Next to his own energy, his most valuable aid was Father Blanchet's Catholic Ladder—a unique chart two feet wide and ten feet long, showing the world emerging from chaos at the bottom of the ladder, then Adam and Eve partaking of the forbidden fruit on the next level, then the expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Half way up the ladder a line led off into oblivion to the side—this "le chemin de Protestantisme"—but the straight path of the true Church ran on up the page to Pio Nono and then to heaven. Marvellously effective was

this invention, for on one trip Father Demers was able to report 750 baptisms in forty days.

This was by no means a record, however. When James Douglas was exploring the southern end of Vancouver Island, looking for the best site for a new company post, he had with him Jean Baptiste Bolduc, a "secular priest," who baptized 102 new converts in a little more than an hour during his first service. The best-known of the pioneer Catholic missionaries was Father Pierre Joseph DeSmet, a Belgian Jesuit who spent most of his life first in the Oregon region, then in the Kootenays and Fraser River regions. As a reward for his missionary labours Father DeSmet in 1847 was made Bishop of Vancouver Island, a diocese which at first included all the mainland too, and even Alaska! After the gold rush, however, a separate diocese of New Westminster was created, with Father Louis Joseph D'Herbomez consecrated as its first bishop.

Protestant clergymen were a little later in the field, and a little less energetic at first in their missionary work. The Hudson's Bay Company, of course, had its chaplains—the Reverend R. J. Staines was at Victoria, and after his death was succeeded by the Reverend Edward Cridge. There was actually no provision for the settlers as yet; acting with its customary caution in giving anything away, the Company did not until 1854 make the necessary arrangements for an Anglican establishment. When such provision was made for Mr. Cridge, it was in the form of "a parsonage and glebe of one hundred acres" and a stipend, three-fourths of which was to be payable out of colonial funds. The plan was to set up a Clergy Reserve to support a "State Church." Non-Anglicans in the colony protested very strongly, however, and the proposal was never carried out. British Columbia did not get its state church.

With the gold rush of 1858 came a rush of clergymen of different denominations to the new fields as well. In August of 1859, for example, Reverend John Sheepshanks arrived

in the colony and proceeded to the Cariboo. Usually, his diary records, the services in the mining camps had to be held in the saloon, since that was always the first, and sometimes the only, building in a new camp. Usually, too, the saloon-keeper was generous enough to clear one end of his establishment for purposes of divine worship, although sad to say, the sale of liquor still went on at the other end during the service. Apparently then, even as now, no one expected the business ethic to stretch too far.

Not all the pioneers of the province were as successful materially as Tom Cunningham, nor as single-minded as Bishop DeSmet or the Reverend John Sheepshanks. John Jessop, for example, came overland from the Red River settlement in 1859. During the short space of seven years he was successively miner, packer, clerk, typesetter, editor, publisher, school teacher and finally superintendent of schools for the new colony. In 1868 he was jobless and broke again, and friends arranged a benefit circus performance for him in Victoria.

There were others about whose careers nothing now is known save the legends which are still told by members of pioneer families. At Yale, for example, during the sixties, one of the many establishments which doubled as saloon and boarding house was operated by an Irishwoman of forbidding appearance and irascible disposition. Joanna Maguire, as she was called, was definitely one of the town's problem cases, for it appears that she was perhaps her own best customer. And when under the influence of her own wares she could curse—and shoot—with the worst of her clientele. Sometimes when "in the mood," Joanna would turn sullen, lock her doors, and refuse to see anyone or sell anything for days on end. Legend has it that on such occasions, if one could get close to a window or a door without being seen, he would hear Joanna inside singing to herself, or talking to herself in the purest of Dublin-accented English on the most esoteric subjects. For, said the popular legend, this was

no mere drunken old Irish harridan. This was in reality the lost daughter of Dan O'Connell, the Great Liberator.

Another character about whom stories still are told was John Fraser, one of the principal shareholders in the Prince of Wales mine on William's Creek. He claimed to be the eldest son of Simon Fraser, and this claim alone would have given him some social position even in a rough community like that on the creek. In addition, however, he was the president of the Literary Society, of the Glee Club, of the Library Association, and of the Methodist choir. In 1864 Fraser received word from the east that the mortgage on the old homestead had been foreclosed, that his aged mother and all his brothers and sisters had been evicted, and that—most cruel blow of all—his fiancée had “married another!” In such circumstances the end was already determined. John Fraser slashed his wrists and ended it all. Certainly his day and age would have him do no less.

Naturally most of the interesting stories centre about the men who came during the gold rush. For most of its early years the gold mine was the key to the existence of the new colony, and the miner its most important citizen. About such men as the fabulous Billy Barker, for example, many stories are still told. Co-discoverer of the vein on William's Creek, Barker was principal shareholder in a mine which produced over \$600,000 in a little over a year. The celebration of his good fortune, both in Barkerville and in Victoria, must have been an epic occasion for all concerned. When Billy made his trip out to Victoria he staged a party there for all his friends. And what a party! For the occasion he simply hired the Golden Hour saloon, bought its entire stock, and opened the doors wide. Three days later the liquor was gone, the saloon was a wreck, and the celebrants were treating their hangovers. The bill for the party, so the story goes, was \$43,000. Small wonder that although Barker's claim was a good one, when it closed down in 1866, the owner was broke! A public subscription was taken which provided him with

transportation out to the coast, but that was as far as he ever got. In 1894 he died in the Old Men's Home in Victoria, filled, it is to be hoped, with pleasant memories of more exciting days.

Best known of all the gold rush characters was the famous "Cariboo" Cameron. With his wife and an only child Cameron arrived in British Columbia in 1860. Five days after their arrival, the child, a daughter, died. The mother, it is said, never recovered from the blow and in October of 1862 she too died. In the meantime, Cameron and his partner Robert Stevenson had struck it rich on William's Creek, and were taking fabulous returns from their claim.

On her death bed Cameron's wife had asked that she be buried in a proper cemetery, not among the stumps of Barkerville's burying grounds, and her husband promised to fulfill her wish. As a result, although a funeral service was held at Camerontown on the creek, the body was not buried. Apparently Cameron first decided to wait until spring and then make the trip to the coast, but after several months had passed he changed his mind. Now a trip to the coast in January was not going to be a pleasant excursion, but Cameron promised \$12.00 per day and a bonus of \$2,000 to anyone who would accompany him and his wife's body. On January 31, with seven companions Cariboo Cameron left Richfield. Six feet of snow covered the ground and the temperature was between 35° and 50° below zero. Behind them they dragged a toboggan upon which the coffin was tied. On top of it they had lashed their supplies, including a two-gallon keg of rum, and a sack of gold dust to pay expenses. Eleven days later the party staggered into Beaver Lake, only seventy-odd miles along the way. Here Cameron was able to buy a horse to haul the toboggan, and they made better time from then on. Down over the frozen Douglas route they found most of the roadhouses closed, and small-fox everywhere! On March 6 they finally reached New Westminster. Next day they sailed over to Victoria, the body of Mrs. Cameron was thawed and embalmed, and on March 9,

after her second funeral service, she was buried in the Victoria cemetery.

The season of 1863 was a spectacularly successful one for the Cameron mine. By the end of the year Cameron himself was reported to be worth \$300,000. In fact, according to legend, he had in his own possession when he came out to the coast in the fall, a sack of gold dust worth \$150,000. By this time he had had enough of mining apparently, for when he reached Victoria in November he closed up all his affairs, and had his wife's body exhumed and—so it is said—placed in a lead-lined box filled with alcohol. Then he said good-bye to his friends and left for the east.

At Cornwall, Ontario, a third funeral service was held for Mrs. Cameron and for the second time she was formally buried. At the time, apparently, some of her relatives asked that her coffin be opened, but Cameron refused permission. As a result wild tales began to circulate among the citizens of Cornwall. It was whispered that Mrs. Cameron really was still alive, that she had been sold by her husband to an Indian chief, and that the coffin which Cameron had brought with him had contained only his gold. Finally, in desperation, the harassed Cameron agreed that his wife's grave should once again be opened. After the curiosity of the relatives had been satisfied, Mrs. Cameron was once again, and for the last time, interred. She had had four funeral services, and three burials!

Cariboo Cameron by this time had suffered other misfortunes. Investments which he made in a steamboat company and in a sawmill both proved disastrous. What was left of his fortune he then plunged and lost in a mining venture in Nova Scotia. Finally, in 1888, aging and virtually penniless, he returned to the Cariboo. No second fortune awaited him there, however, for he died only weeks after his arrival in Camerontown.

Stories such as those of Cariboo Cameron or Judge Begbie are comparatively well-known. But the pages of pioneer history in British Columbia are filled with the names of

thousands of others, of men and women who travelled the road to the gold fields, met varying fortune there, and lived to establish a new Canadian province. They had to face the mountains which dominate the whole of its area; they had to run the rivers which provided the only convenient passes through these mountains. In scaling those mountains, and taming those rivers, the pioneers had written a story so full of romance, so rich in human interest that it should be told again, and again, and yet again.

*Annexation or Confederation*

WHEN JAMES DOUGLAS retired from his twin governorships in 1864, he could look with some pride on his achievements, and regard the baronetcy which had been given him as reward for a job well done. On Vancouver Island the older colony had made its first step towards responsible government when its landowners elected their first representatives to a House of Assembly in 1856. It was a very diffident step; Governor Douglas himself was suspicious of the whole thing and as a result the qualification for holding a seat was made the possession of £300 in property, while to vote one had to hold title to twenty acres of land. In the Nanaimo district, for example, in the second election in August of 1859 there was but one qualified candidate, and one qualified voter! With all its limitations, however, the government of Vancouver Island at least had the appearances, and the possibilities, of the British parliamentary system.

Over in the mainland colony there were no frills nor foolish complications in government, however. Here Governor Douglas had no limits on his executive authority; in fact it was only just before his retirement from office that he was finally persuaded—or rather instructed—to set up a so-called Legislative Council. Two-thirds of the members of this body were in fact official members, appointed by the governor, and one-third were elected representatives. From the point of view of the democrat, at least, the government left much to be desired, and for a few years all issues in British Colum-

bia politics were complicated by the demand for representative and responsible government.

The official retirement of Sir James Douglas in 1864 made it possible to recognize the separate existence of the two colonies by appointing two successors. Albert Kennedy became governor of Vancouver Island and Frederick Seymour was sworn in as governor of British Columbia. For the next two years the two went separate ways. The mainland colony, of course, was the wealthier of the two as long as the Cariboo mines continued to pour out their treasure, but as the flow of gold began to slacken in 1863 and 1864 and then virtually dried up in 1865 and 1866, the new state began to experience difficulties. The older island colony was more stable in its economy, but that economy depended to a very large extent upon Victoria's position as the port of entry for the mainland settlements. As a matter of fact, the affairs of the two colonies were so intimately inter-connected, that there were never any really valid reasons why they should not be joined. In 1866 the necessary legislation passed the mother Parliament and by its terms two became one. Vancouver Island lost its elective House of Assembly and Victoria ceased to be a free port. By way of compensation, however, it was finally chosen as the capital over the determined and bitter opposition of New Westminster interests. After all, it was a nasty blow to the shrewd business men of that city who already had bought property on the hillside over the Fraser where the parliament buildings were to be erected. Now all they had was an imposing "Royal Avenue" which would have fronted the capital building.

The population of the "united colony" was a very fluid one, for this was still a frontier. A fairly permanent nucleus was there, however, and already lumbering, commercial fishing, and agriculture were beginning to take their places alongside gold mining as the supports of the colony's economy. And there were stable elements in the population, too. Much of that population was American, of course, just how much we will never know. An annexationist spokesman

in Washington in 1868 said that 98% of the colony's people were American, but the leading newspaper in Victoria retorted hotly that there were fewer than one hundred such in the whole city of over 6,000. No matter how extensive was American citizenship, there is little doubt about the extent of American influence. For all practical purposes British Columbia was simply a part of San Francisco's hinterland; its commerce passed through that port, its merchants used the banking and credit facilities of that city, and all passenger traffic was carried by American ships. The dependence of the colony upon Californian agencies was in some things almost ludicrous, as when the postal authorities in Victoria had to lay in a supply of American stamps which they affixed to mail going out of the colony, for the post office in San Francisco did not accept British Columbia stamps!

Another element in the population of the new colony was the "solid British" group of officials and Hudson's Bay men, including such men as Judge Begbie, H. P. P. Crease, the colony's Attorney-General, J. Despard Pemberton, the Surveyor-General of the old island colony, and Dr. John S. Helmcken, Governor Douglas' son-in-law. Most of them either had some official connection with London, or were retired from such connection, and naturally enough most of them were still Britishers even though living six thousand miles from the motherland. Their sentiments were expressed for them in a jingle which one of their newspaper critics used to put into their mouths

True Loyalty's to Motherland  
And not to Canada.  
The love we bear is second-hand  
To any step-mama.

There was nothing second-hand about the affections of the step-mama's own children, the Canadian element in the colony's population. And nothing very reserved or reticent either. Among the Canadians were Amor de Cosmos and John Robson, editors of the leading journals in the colony,

spokesmen whose vigorous Canadian nationalism was a far cry from the sheepish and shame-faced variety which later generations were to display. Amor de Cosmos was a delightful character. Born plain William Alexander Smith, he is better known by the more exotic name (he insisted that it meant *Lover of the World*) which he took for himself after he emigrated from his native Nova Scotia. John Robson was the editor of the New Westminster *British Columbian*, the pioneer newspaper of the mainland. Born in Perth, Ontario, Robson came to the west in the rush of 1859, tried his hand at washing on a claim on Hill's Bar that fall, was a day labourer employed clearing land on the townsite of New Westminster, and became the editor of its newspaper in 1861. Together with Amor de Cosmos, he was a vigorous and a consistent advocate of a Canadian confederation.

Between the three elements in the colony's population there was little in common. The real issue of the sixties—and it was not in any way altered by the union of the colonies in 1866—was the question of future policy. Should the new colony continue as an independent Crown Colony, having no legal ties except to Great Britain? Or should it be incorporated into the new Canadian Confederation which was only now being born? Or should it follow the dictates of geography, of commerce, and of the balance sheet, and become part of the United States? Each of these policies now had its advocates.

The British, and official, opinion in the colony was quite unrealistic, for it advocated the purely negative policy of opposing either union with Canada or annexation by the United States. But continued existence as a separate Crown Colony, dependent upon the Colonial Office, was neither desirable nor practical, and officials in London would be the first to agree that some other arrangement had to be made. As long as the Hudson's Bay Company enjoyed its favoured position in the colony the policy of the Colonial Office had to be a careful one. After all, even that august institution could hardly urge surrender of sovereignty which it did not

completely possess. In 1869, however, the Bay Company finally agreed to the sale of its charter rights, and to the surrender of whatever jurisdiction it might have in the colony. With this ticklish question settled, the Secretary of State Lord Granville now officially could announce that the home government favoured confederation with Canada. His pronouncement followed quickly upon the death of the colony's governor Frederick Seymour, a man who had opposed confederation, and the appointment to the vacancy of a man who had already announced his support of that policy. Quite obviously Governor Musgrave's official duty was to boost the cause of confederation. At long last Canadians such as de Cosmos and Robson, men who had practically made careers out of criticizing British officials, found themselves in the same camp as their former enemies. In the colony itself men like Dr. Helmcken and J. D. Pemberton still opposed confederation, probably because, as the latter observed, until a railroad is built, "British Columbia might as well be confederated with the Pyramids of Egypt!" But their opposition was less and less realistic as it became increasingly clear that the issues for the colony was between confederation or annexation to the United States. Staid Britishers such as the two just mentioned were left occupying a political vacuum as the arguments raged on that issue.

It is hardly surprising that there should be sentiment in British Columbia for annexation to the United States. As long as the Civil War continued, of course, annexation was hardly a practical proposal, but by 1866 there were many in Victoria who were ready to draw the inevitable conclusion from the colony's dependence upon San Francisco. And there were many in Washington to push that conclusion. In June of 1866 a resolution was moved in the House of Representatives, and in December of the following year in the Senate, both asserting categorically that "the people of British Columbia" desired admission to the union, and proposing a means to that end. One piece of evidence to support this claim was a petition which reached President Grant late

in December of 1869. The petition was a plea for annexation; it bore the signatures of forty "residents of the Colony of British Columbia—many of us British subjects . . . penetrated with the most profound feelings of loyalty to her Majesty . . ." Their loyalty as British subjects was not as strong as their common-sense as business men, however, and they respectfully petitioned the American government to take steps to admit the colony to the union.

The fact is that very few of the petitioners were British subjects; most of them were American citizens, most of them of German background, and most of them very recent arrivals in the colony. They carried on a vigorous campaign and met with some success in Victoria, but there is little evidence that they won much support on the mainland. In fact the petition's list of signatures (to the original forty another sixty or so were added in a supplementary petition in the spring) represented the sum total of annexation sentiment. While it lasted, however, the movement was a noisy one, and vigorous. And certainly it forced those who shuddered at the thought of being absorbed by the Americans, to give some thought to an alternative. Dr. Helmcken put the problem rather neatly in one of the debates when he observed that "the United States hems us in on every side; it is the Nation by which we exist; it is the Nation which has made this Colony what it is, but nevertheless it is one of our greatest drawbacks. We do not enjoy her advantages, nor do we profit much by them; we do not share her prosperity, and we are far too small to be her rival!" Now, one advantage at least the annexationists had offered. The vital need of the colony was for communications with the east, and this it was claimed, would come with union to the United States. Said the advocates of such union:

You want the mail  
You want the rail  
You want the cars to hie on.  
Come join with us and we'll thread your land  
With passage ways of iron.

Perhaps the metaphors were mixed, but the promise was an attractive one. The proponents of Confederation with Canada certainly could not offer less. To put it politely, union with Canada must also offer material and pecuniary advantages to the colony. Amor de Cosmos put it more bluntly. What was needed, he said, was "a guarantee of the construction by the Dominion government, within two years, of a transcontinental wagon road connecting Canada with the Fraser." That was the price, and as events turned out it was a price which that Dominion government was both ready and eager to pay.

By 1869, according to Sir John A. Macdonald himself, the only opponents of confederation left in British Columbia, were "the Yankee adventurers" and the colonial officials. The "Yankee adventurers" had already failed in their appeal, while the colonial officials, who probably were only afraid of losing their jobs anyway, could be dealt with if London would only "put the screws on." Already a petition for confederation had been presented from Victoria citizens to the Dominion government. Then in September of 1868 an unofficial convention met at Yale, with representatives from the Island, the lower mainland, and the Cariboo, and passed resolutions calling for confederation and damning Governor Seymour's government for its failure to act in this matter, as well as for its lack of the responsible element. The Legislative Council itself had passed more than a year before a resolution approving confederation in principle, then had qualified its approval in February of 1868 by recording its conviction that "under existing circumstances" confederation would be "undesirable." On the vote the official members of the Council, and Governor Seymour himself, were always opposed by the minority of elected representatives.

In June of 1869 Governor Seymour died and to his vacant governorship was appointed Anthony Musgrave, lately governor of Newfoundland, an ardent supporter of confederation, and the nominee of Sir John A. Macdonald. This was obviously "putting the screws on." When he arrived

in the colony in August, Musgrave lost no time in winning over the officials. Promises of judgeships in the new regime to the magistrates in the old, won over some of them; promises of retirement on pension or promotion to other jobs won over still others. At any rate opposition to confederation virtually disappeared. In May of 1870 Joseph Trutch, Dr. Helmcken, and Dr. R. W. Carrell of Barkerville, started for Ottawa as delegates of the colony to negotiate the terms under which British Columbia would enter confederation with Canada.

As we have seen, the price which they were instructed to ask for their co-operation was to be a road through the mountains and across the prairies to Canada. On this demand British Columbia's delegates were prepared to stand. When they actually got down to negotiations, however, they found the Dominion government ready to pay an even higher price, and to promise the construction of a railroad instead. Among all the clauses of the agreement under which British Columbia entered the Confederation of Canada on July 20, 1871, the central one was that which provided for that railroad. It may be true, as a recent history text book puts it, that Canada in the first half of the century "the child of her waterways," became in the second half of that century "no less truly the child of her railways." If it is, then by bringing the first of these great railways into being, British Columbia may claim to have played the role of a somewhat youthful midwife at the second birth.

The part played by British Columbia in the evolution of the Canadian confederation of provinces, and in the subsequent development of that confederation, is in several significant ways strikingly similar to the part played by California in the evolution and development of the United States. Both owed their formal establishment as state organizations to a sudden wave of gold-seeking immigrants. In the case of California, of course, the immigrants were moving into an already settled area, while in British Columbia they were striking into what was really the last unknown section of the

continent. In both cases, however, it was the sudden rush of gold seekers which made formal action necessary. In both cases, too, it was the zeal for union among the new population which combined with an expansionist and imperialist sentiment in the centres of government "back East" to bring about the formal act of union. In the case of British Columbia such union was made conditional upon the successful completion of a railroad to link the two parts.

The building of that road, the Canadian Pacific Railway, did much more than simply that, however. It was the completion of the Union Pacific in 1869 which opened up for settlement the vast area between the Mississippi and California itself. Similarly, the completion of the C.P.R. made possible the settlement of the Northwest Territory lying between the Red River settlements and the Rockies. For a variety of reasons the Canadian development was slower than that of the American mid-west, but the pattern was strikingly similar. The entrance of British Columbia into the Canadian confederation, then, in spite of the fact that Canadian historians seem to have agreed to play it down, was a rather significant moment in Canadian history.

E I G H T E E N

*The Coal and Iron Conquest*

ONE OF THE prevailing misconceptions in Canadian history is the long standing belief that the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway was forced upon the Dominion government by the British Columbia delegates, and that those delegates drove a hard bargain and exacted a very high price for their entrance into confederation. The Liberal opposition to the Macdonald government said so time and time again, and their semi-official organ, the *Globe* called the decision "a rash and maybe disastrous step . . . taken at the dictation of a handful of people 2,500 miles away, and to whom we are already making concessions that they may well be satisfied to accept in exchange for union . . ."

The actual truth is that the Pacific colony's delegates were instructed only to ask for a wagon road to connect British Columbia with Canada. It was the Dominion government which proposed the infinitely more costly undertaking of a railroad instead. The reasons for this unexpected generosity are not hard to see. In the eyes of Macdonald and his colleagues the construction of the railroad was an eventual necessity if there was to be a Canada from coast to coast. If American designs and American ambitions were to be countered at all, they must be countered by Canadian achievement. The decision then was really the inauguration of a "national policy." In fact, the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway was the first truly national project to be undertaken by the new nation. There are not many such in our history.

The "railway clause" in the terms of union committed the Dominion government to "undertake to secure the commencement" of railway construction within two years from the date of union, and "to secure the completion" of the whole project within ten years. At the time perhaps this seemed a reasonable sort of schedule, but very soon it became evident that it would not be met. Surveying began immediately under government direction, but this was obviously only a preliminary. Some private company must build the road. But which company? Our old friend Alfred Waddington organized one group and sought incorporation and a contract, but with no success. His company was lacking in one rather important respect, for it had no capital at all. Following his failure he joined forces with a group of American capitalists now interested in the project, men who could command capital in very large sums to build the Canada Pacific Railway. Still another company, the Interoceanic, was organized at the same time by a group of Canadian financiers. Efforts to bring about an amalgamation of the two failed to achieve anything, and finally a third company was created and to it was awarded the charter to build the continental line.

No sooner were these politically touchy negotiations completed when the Liberal opposition brought its charges that the direction of the new company had bought and paid for their charter by their contributions to the Macdonald government's election funds. The resulting Pacific Scandal brought down the government, brought into office late in 1873 a Liberal ministry and a Liberal prime minister, Alexander Mackenzie, who had already announced a new policy of railroad construction. In effect, the new plan was to go slow, to build railroad lines only if no other means of communication (i.e. an American line, or a waterway) was available, and then only if the funds were on hand. A far cry this from "Sir John A's promise"!

Naturally there was bitter feeling among the people of British Columbia at the failure of the Dominion government to live up to the original agreement, and the premier of

British Columbia, G. A. Walkem, even made official protests to the Colonial Office in London. Lord Carnarvon, the Colonial Secretary, offered to arbitrate the dispute and eventually gave his name to a new agreement. Controversy did not end with this intercession, however. In fact, in the spring of 1878 the legislature of British Columbia approved a resolution to withdraw from confederation unless construction began by May of 1879. By that time, fortunately, the Conservatives were back in office in Ottawa and faced with the promises which they themselves had made. To placate opinion in the Pacific province, contracts were hurriedly let and construction actually began.

While all these rather shoddy political battles were being fought out, something had been done. Sandford Fleming, the chief engineer of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, began in 1871 the difficult task of surveying a route for the proposed line through the mountains. His original recommendation was for a line which would strike through Yellowhead Pass to the Upper Fraser. Perhaps this was the best route from the engineer's point of view, for this is the lowest of all the passes through the Rockies. An alternative, and shorter route was proposed by Walter Moberley, the Assistant Surveyor-General of the colony of British Columbia, who in 1866 had explored an alternative passage through the Rockies by way of the Kicking Horse Pass, and through the Selkirks by Eagle Pass. Since these two routes are those now followed, the first by today's C.N.R., the second by the C.P.R., it would be perhaps impolite here to discuss which claim was the sounder.

Other routes were examined carefully. In fact, during the years from 1873 to 1876 the Rocky Mountain goats were all but pushed right off the tops of the peaks by the crowds of surveyors and engineers bustling about all over the region between the Rockies and the sea. Even before their work was done, and the route of the whole road finally decided upon, building of some sections had begun. In 1879 tenders were called for the construction of the first purely B.C.

stretch, from Emory's Bar down on the lower Fraser to Savona up on the Thompson.

Up to this point the railway story had been a sorry one of delay, indecision and changing policy. As a result, when construction did finally get under way in British Columbia it was approximately at the time which in the beginning had been fixed as the time for the road's completion. But now that work had actually begun the delays and indecisions were no more. The first contracts were let to an American firm headed by Andy Onderdonk, a young engineer who had already a reputation as a "man who got things done." And get things done he did.

Preliminary work was hurried in the summer months of 1880. A wharf was built at Emory's Bar, about four miles downstream from Yale, and immediately below the one shallow stretch in the lower river, and supplies were landed there by boat from San Francisco and Victoria. Part of the equipment brought in was a steam locomotive which was put ashore early in May of 1881. On May 23 the first track was laid at Emory and the event was properly celebrated. Fortunately the following day was a holiday—the Queen's birthday—and so the party was not restrained by any thoughts of early rising the next day.

Yale and Emory were busy places during the construction boom. Probably some 10,000 men were employed either on the right of way itself or in the powder factory, the acid works, the machine shops or the general offices which Onderdonk established at Yale. Of that number probably 6,000 were Chinese. Many of these were recruited in B.C., the fag end of the earlier mining and road-building boom, but for the greater part they were "contract labourers." The nature of their contracts, and the methods of paying—or underpaying—the Chinese labourers, probably put some restraint upon them and made them fairly sober citizens. There was no restraint, of any kind, upon the workers of other nationalities who flocked into Yale on Saturday nights to get their pay, and spend it. The long main street of the town was lined with its

"business houses," most of them single storey wooden shacks with two storey fronts. Probably half of them were saloons, the favourites among them being the Railroaders' Retreat, the Stiff's Rest, the Rat Trap, and the Pick Me Up. No matter how many saloons there were, it seems there were never enough on a Saturday night and the battle to get into the bars probably caused far more casualties than all the other hazards of railway construction in the canyons.

Any railroader who takes either the C.N. or the C.P. trains down through the Thompson and into the Fraser gorge will agree that there must have been enough of these hazards, too. Probably nowhere in the world did the railroad builder face such difficulties as did these crews pushing the line up from Yale to Lytton. In an age when tunnels were the last possible resort of the railway engineer, this line had to have, in its first twenty miles, no fewer than thirteen of them, and most of them were more than one hundred feet in length. There was only one bright spot in the picture for the engineers; they were able to use in spots at least the right of way which Royal Engineers and civilian contractors had pushed up the canyon during the sixties. Thus in many places the steel rails were laid right on the old wagon road. Of course this meant the end of the Cariboo Highway, but there were no historians about to weep for its passing, for steel rails and iron locomotives were to be the signs of a new era.

The dangers and difficulties of the work in the Fraser Canyon were almost equalled by the dangers and difficulties of pushing the line through the Rockies far to the east. Years of painstaking survey and exploration were brushed aside when the Kicking Horse Pass was selected as the road through the Rockies, mainly because it was about a hundred miles shorter than a line through the more northern Yellowhead Pass. Whether this decision was a wise one or not, and the argument still goes on, once made it was carried out with vigour, with engineering ingenuity, and with enormous expense! From the summit of the Rockies to the exit from the Kicking Horse Pass is a distance of some forty miles. In that

distance the line of the new railway dropped over 2,750 feet! In fact, the two and one-fifth per cent. grade which was the maximum allowed, was for most of the distance the usual grade. In the same forty miles, the road crossed the Kicking Horse River nine times.

In August of 1885 the Governor-General, the Marquis of Lansdowne, set out on the tour of the Canadian provinces which was now almost expected of a new incumbent. His predecessors, the Earl of Dufferin and the Marquis of Lorne, had both made the tour and had both visited British Columbia. Both had in fact reached the coast by rail to San Francisco, and then by steamship to Victoria. It was a sign of the times that the new Governor-General now announced that he intended to follow the all-Canadian road, even though that road was still not quite complete. As a matter of fact, when the vice-regal party reached the end of steel coming from the east, they were still about seventeen miles east of Revelstoke. At this point the dignitaries had to take horse-back for a trip of some forty-two miles to reach the construction being pushed through from the other end. The vision of a similar party of politicians, notables and aides, having to do the same thing today, evokes a delightful series of pictures!

Perhaps the visit of the Governor-General illustrates something more than the refreshing informality of construction days. After a visit of exactly thirteen days spent in receiving addresses of welcome at Victoria and New Westminster, and a brief voyage up the coast, the vice-regal party returned up the new railroad on its way home again. They had to cross the gap between the ends of steel again, but this time they had to sit their horses for only twenty-eight miles, instead of forty-two. Obviously nobody had been wasting time!

Nobody was wasting time in getting the road into use, either. As a matter of fact, when the first train pulled out of Montreal, scheduled to make the inaugural run to Port Moody on the coast, there were still over two miles of track not laid. As the train chugged across the prairies with its load of officials and company directors the construction crews were

busy finishing their task in the mountains. On November 7, 1885, the locomotive and two cars arrived at Craiggellachie, a little station about midway between Revelstoke and Sicamous. At that point one rail still remained to be laid. Solemnly it was put in place and secured. The last spike was driven by Donald A. Smith, Lord Strathcona, and the Canadian Pacific Railway became a reality!

The spike, it must be noted here, was no golden ornament. Nor were the people assembled to witness the historic ceremony mere politicians and notables brought together at great expense to celebrate the occasion. The spike was an iron one—"just as good an iron spike," said William Van Horne, the Company's general manager, "as any on the road. . . ." And the witnesses were for the most part the men who had built the road. If there were any idle spectators present, they had complied with Van Horne's order that any such would "have to pay full fare." And knowing the company and its hard driving bosses, we must suspect that there was very little celebration following the event. In all probability most of the spectators probably had to work overtime that night to make up for lost time!

Late the next day the train reached the Pacific Ocean, having completed in days the long journey from Montreal which used to mean months of hard labour for the fur traders of the old Nor'-West Company. George Simpson, for example, took eighty-four days to cover the distance from Hudson's Bay to the Pacific; until the day when the first locomotive chugged into Port Moody, his time remained the record for the distance.

The first train, incidentally, reached the ocean, it is true, but only just. The first terminal was at the settlement of Port Moody, named after the commander of the Royal Engineers who had come out to the colony in 1858. Now Port Moody lies at the head of Burrard Inlet, more than ten miles from the entrance. Here the inlet is very shallow and the tide runs far out on mud flats which presented very real difficulties in the way of providing adequate port facilities.

Obviously a better site for the terminal lay down near the entrance to the inlet, where a sawmill, a few settlers, and a saloon, made a village. To this village it was now planned to take the railroad. The settlement was at first known only as Gastown, named after Gassy Jack Deighton, a former steamboater on the Fraser, and now proprietor of the saloon. To give it the dignity befitting a railroad terminus, Gastown was officially renamed, first as Granville and then very quickly after as Vancouver. By June of 1886 a city of two thousand persons was awaiting the rails. On the second Sunday of the month the new city caught fire, and within a matter of hours it had disappeared again. By September, however, most of the buildings were up again—no lack of lumber bothered the builders of those days—and by the spring of 1887, when finally the railroad reached into Vancouver, it arrived in a city of some eight thousand population, with a waterworks system, a mayor and council, about eighteen miles of level roads and sidewalks, and even a hotel and opera house. Two years after the city was born its council was granting a charter to a company which offered to provide a street railway system. Vancouver may not have any right to claim that it grew better than any other Canadian city, but at least it can claim that it grew faster!

The completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway provided British Columbia with the essential link with the east, the *sine qua non* of confederation as far as most of its citizens were concerned. For a long time it was the only link, even between the coast and the interior, for the building of the railroad had in fact destroyed the only wagon road through the mountains. Not that it was the only railroad, of course. Indeed the decade of the nineties saw many other roads projected and even a few built, but they all ran north and south, most of them either ending in the American railroad towns on the Great Northern, or at the C.P.R. line in the north. By 1899 no fewer than seventy-three companies were incorporated to build railways in the province, twenty-seven of them for roads in the Kootenay mining areas, and eleven of

those companies actually did build some lines. Most of them ran south to the Great Northern, but the C.P.R. began to compete in the Kootenay region in the nineties, either by building roads itself or by leasing rails already down. By 1916 a continuous rail line existed through southern British Columbia, the line which runs from Lethbridge by way of the Crow's Nest Pass to the Kootenay cities and then by the Kettle Valley line to Princeton and Hope and Vancouver.

The second railway in British Columbia was at one time projected as an integral part of the transcontinental system. After all, a line which runs *a mari usque ad mare*, as our coat of arms proclaims, certainly ought to go all the way to Victoria. At least, so argued the citizens of Vancouver Island. But the problem of bridging the straits could be solved only by running the main line far north on the coast, and this was out of the question. Finally Vancouver Island got its railway, but it was built by private interests. The Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway was an undertaking of Robert Dunsmuir, the coal baron of the Island, utilizing his own capital and that of four American financiers, C. P. Huntingdon, Mark Hopkins, Leland Stanford, and Charles Crocker. The names might well have over-awed a less capable man, for this quartet of financial sharks had already swallowed much bigger fish than Dunsmuir. Apparently they did not scare the tight-fisted old Scot, for after the road was built he still owned a controlling interest in it! Not many of their business allies could say the same.

Railway building in northern and central British Columbia came a little later than in the south. In 1902, however, two new charters were granted by the Dominion government for transcontinental lines. One of the new companies, the Grand Trunk Pacific, planned to use the route through the mountains which had been talked up so enthusiastically in the eighties, that through the Yellowhead Pass, and up the Fraser's north fork to Prince George. At that point the G.T.P. when it was finally completed, left the Fraser and struck westward up the Nechako, over the divide to the Bulkley River and then down the Skeena River to the coast. The railway's new

terminal was at the newly created town of Prince Rupert. This road, like every other in B.C., runs through some incredibly difficult country. The last two hundred miles of steel, from Hazelton to the coast, were perhaps the costliest miles in Canadian railroad history. The new line went into operation just as the First World War broke out, and thus at a time when additional railroad facilities were desperately needed. When the war ended, however, the finances of the line obviously required some sort of drastic action if the company was to stay afloat.

One of the many obligations which the Grand Trunk directors found it impossible to fulfill was the obligation to build a road from Prince George down to a main line junction at Vancouver. Construction did actually begin on such a line in 1912; it was to follow the Fraser to Lillooet and thence westward over the mountains to the Cheakamus River and down to the head of Howe Sound. The road was begun with high hopes, but it never had much more until very recent days. When the war ended, and the Grand Trunk disappeared in the merger of its lines as part of the Canadian National system, the provincial authorities at Victoria were faced with the hard choice of either abandoning the road, or building it themselves. Characteristically enough, they really did neither. Finally a railroad line was completed by provincial government financing, but one end of the rail was at Squamish, a four-hour boat trip up the coast from Vancouver, and the other in open country near the town of Quesnel. If ever there was a railroad which began nowhere, and ran nowhere, it was the P. G. E. (Its name was the Pacific Great Eastern, but its initials were alleged really to stand for Please Go Easy, or, more bitterly, the Prince George Eventually.)

The P. G. E. was never a model railroad; its schedules were the standing joke of the settlements through which it passed, and its annual balance sheet was an annual headache for every provincial government. But what a delightful road it was for the visitor who did not need to worry about taxes,

or schedules, or connections. Up through the Cheakamus Canyon the grades were terrific; at the top the engineer used to stop the train so that the passengers could see the view, and see the salmon in the river alongside the right of way. Or so the conductor used to tell them. There was always a suspicion that perhaps the poor old locomotive merely needed a rest. The line ran on past Alta Lake, where the train used to stop while the passengers had lunch (the conductor having phoned ahead to order it) and across a plateau to Pemberton. A mile or so beyond that town the railway right of way ran into—and partly obliterated—the old Cariboo Highway. Around the lakes and down to Lillooet the going was fairly level and dizzy speeds of almost thirty miles an hour were sometimes reached. Messages to be delivered, sacks of coal to be dropped off, cows on the track, parties of fishermen or hunters at flag stations along the way, all made such speed an unusual thing however. Once I remember a stop of about ten minutes while a little Indian passenger ran back up the track to get the cap which he had dropped out his open window! Since we were then about six hours late, this stop was really not important. Speed on this line was not usual. But then, it was probably not desirable, either, for it was rumoured that the rolling stock was the oldest on the North American continent.

All this, notice, has been put in the past tense. For in November of 1952, at long last, the rails of the P. G. E. were finally brought up to Prince George. The railroad which has been "forty years a-birthing," now has at least one terminus and one junction with another railroad. There are plans, too, for still more extension of the road on into the Peace River district to tap the wheat lands there, and even rumours that when this is done the P. G. E. may break even on its balance sheet. And, although I hesitate to repeat them, there are even nasty stories going about that new rolling stock is in use, and that schedules are now taken seriously. If true, it is a pity!

Long before the P. G. E. had been put into operation on

its rather abbreviated shuttle service, another and a much grander project had been brought into being. For by 1915 the new Canadian Northern Railway had completed its line by way of the Yellowhead Pass and the Fraser and Thompson and Fraser again, down to Vancouver. That line also went into operation just as the requirements of the war made its facilities desperately needed. That line, it was obvious, would also have its difficulties in more normal times. Even during the war both the new companies, faced with rising construction costs and inability to borrow new capital, were embarrassments to the provincial governments which had guaranteed their bonds. As a result, everyone was probably relieved when the Railroad Inquiry Commission of 1916 recommended that the Dominion government should take over the two newer transcontinental roads and assume their liabilities. For British Columbia the implementing of this recommendation gave permanent existence to its three great lines. The northernmost one runs from Red Pass Junction on the main line of the Canadian National up the Fraser itself to Prince George and on to Prince Rupert. The C.N. line itself follows the route of the Overlanders through Yellowhead Pass and down the North Thompson to Kamloops and by way of the east side of the Fraser Canyon to Port Mann and by leased line across the river to New Westminster and Vancouver. The third road, the Canadian Pacific, is not just a railway. It is, its shareholders proudly affirm, a "system," for it has two routes through the mountains, one through the Kicking Horse, and one over the Crow's Nest Pass, and two lines down to the coast, with feeder lines running into each.

With the coming of the railways to British Columbia pioneer days were over. Not that the wilderness has been conquered, for nine-tenths of the province is still untouched. But the timber cruiser, or the prospector, or the scout for the investment banker, the men who probe that wilderness today, use the airplane and the helicopter to get to their wilderness posts, employ mechanical gadgets to cut down the forests,

depend upon Geiger counters to locate minerals, and record their findings on film and tape. The day—the very recent day—when the pioneer had to pit his legs and his wind against the mountains and the rivers of the far-west wilds, ended with the echo of a locomotive whistle in the canyons of the great rivers.

The story of British Columbia from that day to this is an important one. It is compounded of a very impressive economic development, along with the growth of parliamentary constitutions in that eminently satisfactory pattern which has produced no great achievements, and no great scandals. In fact, since that day the closest thing to a provincial hero has been probably "Honest John" Oliver, the closest to a provincial cause the campaign for "better terms" of union, the closest to a provincial issue the question what to do with the P. G. E., or with the Doukhobors. For fifty years after confederation, in fact, British Columbia's politics were carried on at a consistently low temperature. Equanimity was the order of the half century. Perhaps this was one of the reasons for the rather remarkable, although unspectacular, economic development of the same years. There was solid achievement, and solid fortunes were made. The critic may note with dismay, however, that the economic achievement was marked by an apparent campaign to cut down all marketable timber and smash down everything else, and to net every fish in the province's waters. Conservation was hardly the goal of the times.

During the hungry thirties both the political calm and the economic orthodoxy were rudely disturbed. Political stability was threatened by the frightening prospect of a swing to the left, and for a while at least, the possibility that British Columbia would have a socialist government disturbed the rest of every respectable investment banker in Toronto or Montreal, London or New York. The economic progress of the past was rudely ended by the depression, and in the resulting stagnation many began to reckon up the price which had been paid in natural resources. Whatever the reasons,

a new era began for British Columbia. Recent events almost suggest that the political middle has been swallowed up by right and left, so that the old line parties, so called, have disappeared, and the battle is between extremes, with "no compromise" the new battle cry on the hustings. If that is true then British Columbia's politics will be more interesting and more exciting in the next fifty years than in the last half-century. One thing is certain, however. No matter how high the political temperature may rise, and no matter how significant the political experiments which may be conducted, it is doubtful if the province will produce such men and women as those we have been watching for the last several hundred pages. The pioneers of British Columbia were perhaps the last pioneers, at least in the sense of being the conquerors of a physical wilderness. As such their records and their stories deserve not only this telling but many more. Let us hope they get such a reward.

## NOTES ON SOURCES

It seems reasonable to assume that any reader who has reached this place in the book must be the kind who might be interested in knowing something about the materials upon which the narrative was based. Briefly, it has derived from two sources. First of all there is a wealth of material available for the student of British Columbia's history in the Public Archives of the province at Victoria. Diaries, local newspapers, official records, correspondence, even photographs by the thousands, are all there for his use. In my experience, I have found no better organized, better administered and more generally helpful provincial archives department than that in British Columbia.

The second source of information about B. C.'s pioneer period is, of course, the more usually available printed book. The persons who goes to his own library looking for books about British Columbia will probably be disappointed at first. There is no good single volume history of the province as yet, and the standard account is still the portly two volume, 1914 edition of *British Columbia, From the Earliest Times to the Present*, by F. W. Howay and E. O. S. Scholefield. There are, however, many very good monographs on some special episode or some particular person, while many of the journals of explorers, and of fur traders have been edited and published so that they are easily available in most libraries. From this second source of further information about B. C., here are a few of the more obvious works.

For the period of discovery and exploration there is much to be gained from the Everyman edition of Richard Hakluyt's *Voyages*, from H. R. Wagner's *Spanish Exploration in the Strait of Juan de Fuca*, and his *Spanish Exploration of the Northwest Coast*, and from Cecil Jane's *A Spanish Voyage to North West America . . . in 1792*. British explorers all left journals of their voyages which have been published and widely circulated. Captain Cook's *A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean* (3v.), and Capain Vancouver's *A Voyage of Discovery*

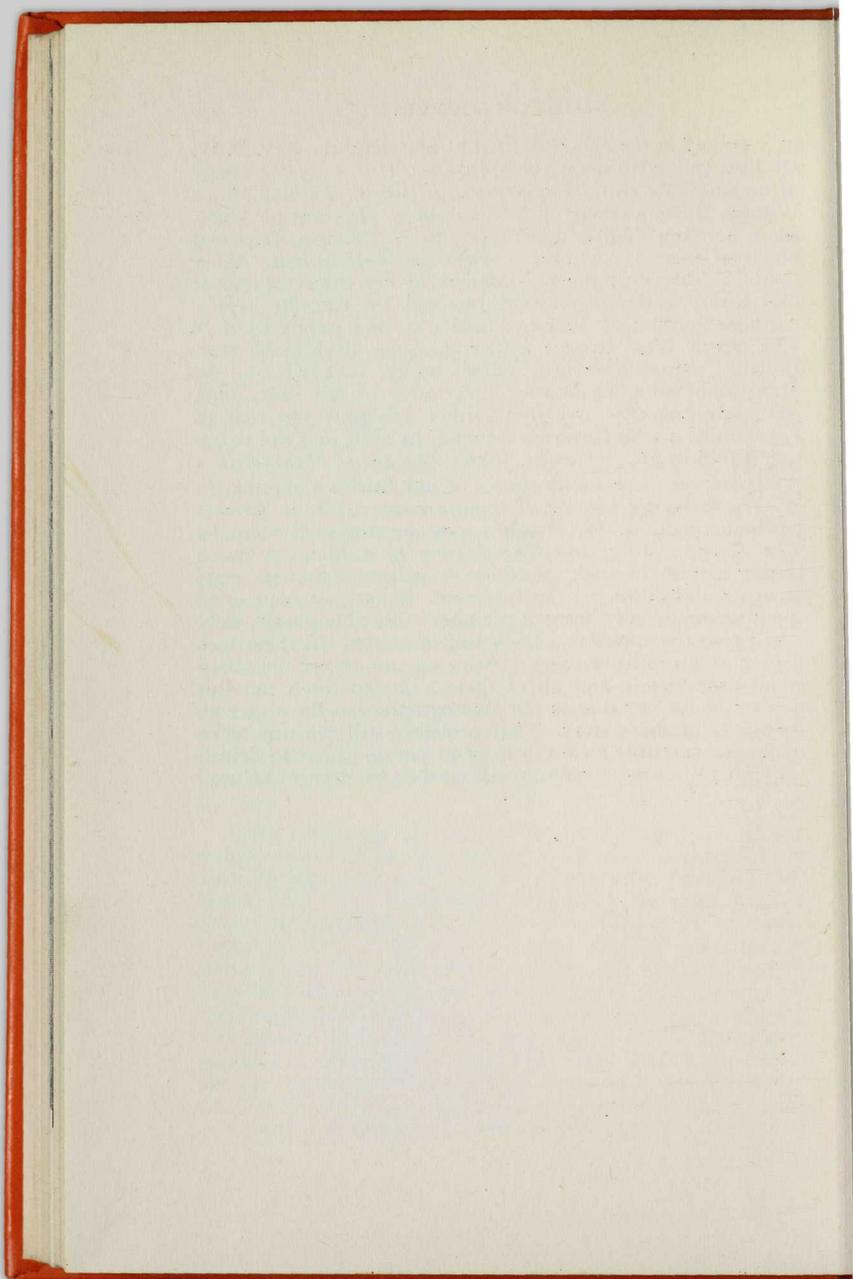
to the North Pacific Ocean are interesting even today, and so, for a different reason, is John Meares' *Voyages Made in the Years 1788 and 1789*. Alexander Mackenzie carefully recorded his experiences in his *Voyages from Montreal . . . to the frozen and Pacific Oceans*, while Simon Fraser's *Journal of a Voyage from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Coast, 1808*, is in R. F. K. Masson's *Les Bourgeois de la Campagne du Nord-Ouest*. David Thompson's records are in part in J. B. Tyrell's account of the *Travels of David Thompson*.

The period of the fur trade is rich in its literature, although the Nor-Westers do not fare as well as the Bay men. There are several good histories of the Hudson's Bay Co. (for example those of Beckles Wilson, *The Great Company*, and of Douglas MacKay, *The Honourable Company*.) but there are no comparable works on the North West Company. Daniel Harmon's *Journal of Voyages and Travels in the Interior of North America* is a delightful piece, and so is Gabriel Franchere's personal record of his *Voyage to the North West Coast of America in the years 1811-1814*. Governor Simpson's two journeys to the Pacific are described in his published journals. The 1824 journal, edited by Frederick Merk, appears as *Fur Trade and Empire, George Simpson's Journal, 1824-1825*; while *Simpson's 1828 Journey to the Columbia* has been edited by E. E. Rich for the Champlain Society. There are two series of John McLoughlin's Letters, the larger collection edited by E. E. Rich and a supplementary collection by B. B. Barker. Miss Cecil Dryden has edited the journal of Ross Cox and that of Alexander Ross and put them into a colourful little volume entitled *Up the Columbia for Furs*.

Gold rush days are responsible for a large part of the archival material in the Victoria collection, but surprisingly little has appeared in the way of printed works. Judge F. W. Howay and R. L. Reid were responsible for a good many essays and periodical articles, but most of them are not easily available. W. N. Sage's *Sir James Douglas and British Columbia* is the work of one of the very few professional historians who have mined this field, but there were many (professional and otherwise) who in the days of the rush were very anxious to describe their experiences. R. W. Ballantyne provided a *Handbook to the New Gold Fields*, and Commander Mayne described his *Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island*. The Reverend John Sheepshanks gave us a journal describing the difficulties of a pioneer clergyman

in *A Bishop in the Rough*, edited by his friend the Rev. D. W. Duthie. Judge Howay gave us *An Early History of the Fraser Mines* and *The Royal Engineers in British Columbia*. Major William Downie described his exploits in *Hunting for Gold*, while a young English adventurer, R. B. Johnson, described his experiences as a packer in *Very Far West Indeed*. Agnes Laut has described the *Overlanders* in her little volume of that name, while Viscount Milton and Dr. Cheadle kept a narrative journal of their overland trip, and published it as *The North West Passage by Land*. Some of Ranald MacDonald's papers have been edited by W. L. Lewis and N. Murakami and published as a *Narrative of His Early Life*. An interesting trip over the Cariboo Highway was that of Lord Dufferin, the Governor-General, in 1876, and the narrative is told in Molyneux St. John's *The Sea of Mountains*.

There are some lovely stories of old British Columbia in W. W. Walkem's volume of reminiscences, while a Victoria newspaperman, D. W. Higgins, gave us two such volumes, *The Mystic Spring*, and *The Passing of a Race*. A much greater wealth of such anecdotes is still available in every town up and down the Cariboo road. In fact, an hour or so spent in the town's "licensed premises"—horrible phrase, that!—will give the traveller a book full of stories. In them fact, fiction and probably sheer romancing are mixed in about equal proportions—and all of them a joy to listen to. But neither books nor diaries nor photographs can do justice to British Columbia's story. That probably still remains to be told. And certainly no words in print can do justice to British Columbia's beauty. *That* you will need to see even to believe!



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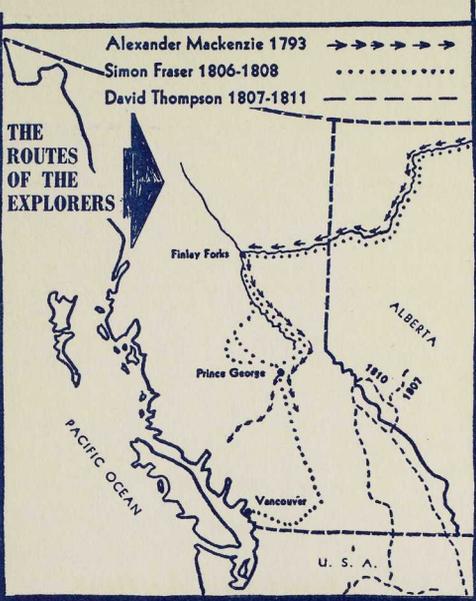
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**THE  
ROUTES  
OF THE  
EXPLORERS**

Alexander Mackenzie 1793

Simon Fraser 1806-1808

David Thompson 1807-1811



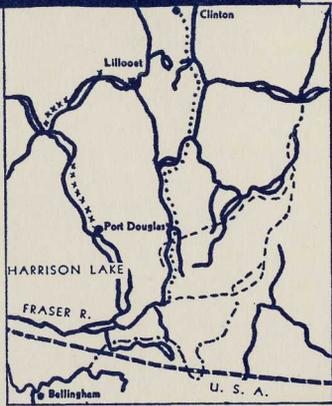
**THE  
OLD  
TRAILS**

Douglas Wagon  
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Cariboo  
Highway . . . . .

Bellingham Bay  
Trail - - - - -

H.B.C. Brigade  
Trails - - - - -

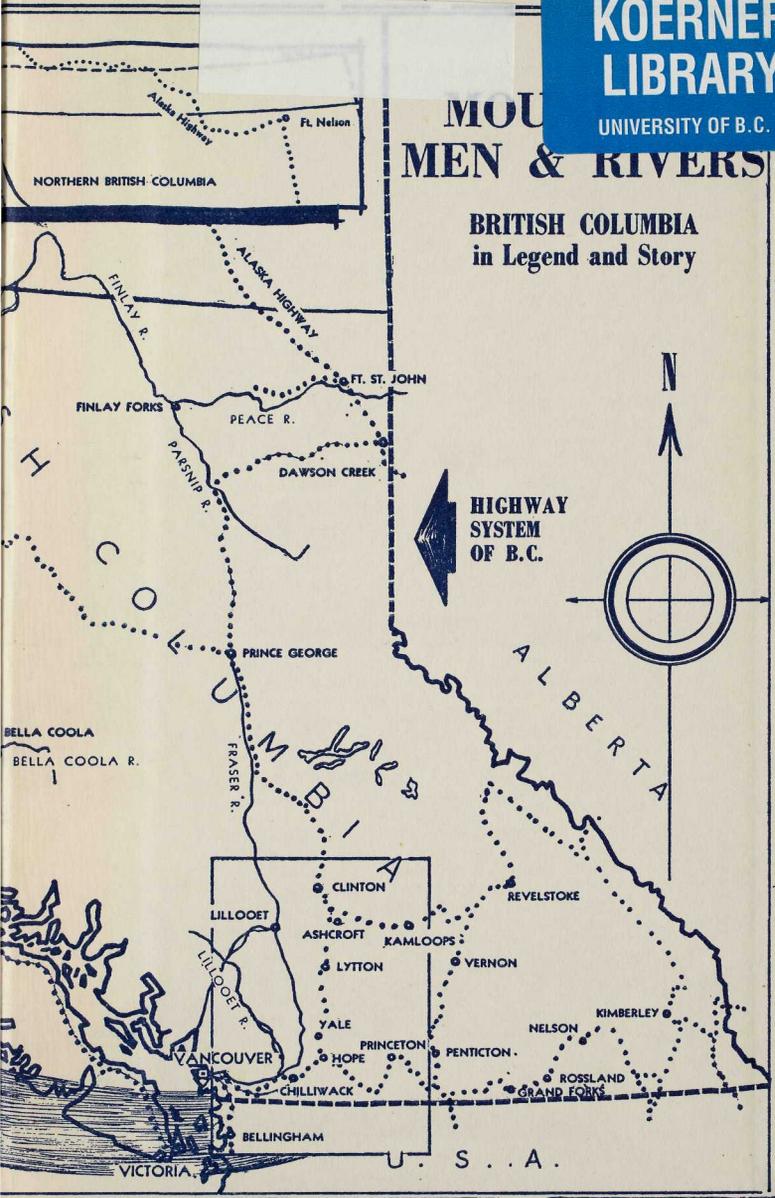


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