



The skyline of Vancouver is overshadowed by the Coast Mountains.

Ah, Vancouver! Of all Canada's cities, none evokes a warmer response or wins more extravagant praise. For this is visually at least, Paradise on the Pacific, a port city blessed with a superb conjunction of ocean, river, mountain, forest and parkland. Its deep-sea harbour has been compared with Rio de Janeiro, Hong Kong, and Sydney, Australia. It is, quite simply, one of the world's most visually attractive places; if there were beauty contests for cities this Riviera of Canada would be weighed down with trophies.

It holds a special place in Canadian affections. Montreal and Toronto outrank it in size and population, but few would grudge Vancouver pride of place for physical attractiveness. If you are given to extremes of activity, you can ski in the morning on nearby Grouse Mountain, swim in the afternoon, or skin-dive off its coast in one of the most interesting undersea areas in the world, then take a scenic drive at evening along sea-girt highways with fjord-like settings unsurpassed in North America.

Vancouver also has personality. Rich, handsome, expansive to the point of bombast, the city delights in a special conceit of itself, a self-sufficiency partaking per-

#### Urban profile: Vancouver

## *Vancouver is Canada's visual paradise*

haps of a pinch of complacency. It arouses strong reactions: admirers sigh at the mention of its name, detractors sniff or shrug ruefully and mutter about its lingering provincialism.

And it may be true that Vancouver's pride, in its mauve and purple twilights, its bountiful topographical gifts and life-enhancing climate, gives way at times to a certain hauteur induced in part by a sense of isolation. For Vancouver, with its barrier of mountains, looks south and west more often than east towards the other nine provinces. Similarly, its economic lines of force run north and south rather than east and west; directly north of Washington state, it sometimes feels more American than Canadian. Yet paradoxically there is a strong element of Britishness in Vancouver, communicated by its near-neighbour Victoria, the Anglophile capital of British Columbia across the Strait of Georgia.

Vancouver likes to think of itself as having a distinctness, a separateness. It calls itself God's Country. A former B.C. Premier, Mr. W. A. C. Bennett, who ruled so long he seemed to be in power forever, spoke of the province as being "plugged into God." One of B.C.'s established