

such route was practicable by the sea, turned his steps southward again. When he reached the head waters of the Fraser he sought and found the ocean at the mouth of the Bella Coola River. It was a memorable day—the 20th July, 1793—when he first saw the waters of the Pacific. It led to most important results, and opened up the way for the fur traders into New Caledonia, as the north-eastern part of British Columbia was then called.

It must be borne in mind that in a very vast territory making up the whole northern and north-western part of North America, there were really no boundary lines—no settled white population, no form of government, except the strict authority exercised by the fur companies over their servants—only fur traders and Indians. Rupert's Land, lying west of Hudson's Bay, was a country of vague limits. New Caledonia had no boundaries fixed to it. Oregon Territory of that day was looked upon indefinitely as a wide area drained by the Columbia River, including now what is a large part of British Columbia and the States of Washington and Oregon. Even the great Louisiana Territory, which occupied the central plain of the continent drained by the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, had no set limits, and was supposed by some to have reached the ocean. It is difficult to describe the country geographically as it was then, except as a vast No Man's Land. Generally it was known as the Indian Territory, and was made up of everything outside of Rupert's Land not owned and occupied by other nations. The Hudson's Bay Company, under its charter confirmed after the union with the North-West Company in 1821, had the exclusive right of trading with the Indians throughout its vast extent, and Canadian law, so far as British subjects were concerned, prevailed.

After Sir Alexander Mackenzie came other noted explorers and traders. David Thompson, in behalf of whom the Thompson River is called, entered British Columbia from the north-west, through the Kootenay country, and established a number of posts in the southern interior. One of these was situated where the City of Spokane now stands, and was established about the same time that the Astor Fur Company of New York built the fort of Astoria in order to compete with the British companies for the western fur trade. Simon Fraser, whose name is given to the