

VANCOUVER ISLAND



SEPARATED from the Mainland of British Columbia and the State of Washington by Queen Charlotte Sound and the Straits of Georgia and Juan de Fuca, Vancouver Island stands in about the same geographical relation to the continent of North America as England does to the continent of Europe. It forms a natural rampart to Great Britain's possessions bordering the North Pacific, guarding the mouths of the Fraser and Columbia rivers, commanding the entrances to the Straits, and providing a rallying point, coaling station and supply depot for her ships of war. While, from a defensive and strategical point of view, Vancouver Island is the key to the North Pacific, her position should make her also the absolute mistress of the commerce of these waters. Lying between the 49th and 51st parallels of north latitude, her shores are accessible from Japan, China, India and Australasia by the short, direct "Northern route," freer from violent storms and more healthful than the southern, landing the cargoes from the Orient in a cooler temperature and affording a shorter land haul across the continent to the eastern trade centres and the Atlantic seaboard.

HISTORICAL

In 1592 Juan de Fuca sailed into the Straits which bear his name, and he was probably the first white man to set foot on Vancouver Island. Juan Perez visited Nootka Sound in 1774, Captain James Cook followed him in 1778, and in the following year Captain Mears established a trading post there, under the British flag, which was afterwards seized by Don Estivan Martinez, in the name of the King of Spain, but restored to Great Britain in 1795. Captain George Vancouver, to whom was entrusted the arranging of details of the Spanish evacuation of Nootka, made a complete survey of the Straits in 1792-3, and established the existence of