

## B.C. CENTENNIAL STAMP

Thirty million 7-cent stamps commemorating the hundredth anniversary of British Columbia's entry into Confederation were issued by the Canada Post Office on July 20.

The design for the 40-mm-by-24-mm commemorative was created by E.R.C. Bethune of Vancouver, who had been inspired, he said, by memories of boyhood days and parades in which bicycles were decorated by strips of coloured paper. His work represents an abstraction of British Columbia joining the new nation of Canada.



### HISTORY OF B.C.

When British Columbia entered Confederation on July 20, 1871, little more than 100 years had passed since its coastal waters had been entered for the first time by the ships of European explorers.

Exploration of the British Columbia coast was begun by the Spaniards Juan Perez in 1774 and Bodega y Quadra in 1775. In 1778, the English explorer Captain James Cook, pausing in his search for the Northwest Passage, made the first landing, at Nootka Sound on the west coast of Vancouver Island, and claimed the coastal region for Britain. The claim was disputed by Spain, which still laid claim to the whole area. It was not until after Captain George Vancouver's survey of the coast in 1792-94 that the contentious ownership issue was finally resolved in Britain's favour.

The fur trade, which began soon after Cook's account of his trading with the native Indians, was flourishing by this time. British and American trading ships plied along the coast, while traders and explorers from the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company approached B.C. over land to establish new posts and trade routes. It was during this period that Alexander Mackenzie completed his epic journey from the East to the Pacific Ocean in 1793, that Simon Fraser, in 1808, followed to the sea the great river that now bears his name, and that David Thompson, in 1807 and 1811, explored the upper and lower reaches of the Columbia River.

By the mid-1800s American trade competition and the growing influx of American settlers prompted Britain to consolidate its holdings in the West. In 1846 the 49th Parallel was established as the official boundary between British and American territory from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. In 1849,

Vancouver Island, with Victoria as its capital, became the first Crown colony to be established in British territory west of the Great Lakes. In 1858 the mainland territory was proclaimed the Crown Colony of British Columbia with New Westminster as its capital.

### GOLD RUSH

That same year gold discoveries brought prospectors to the Fraser River and thence to the great Cariboo Gold Rush of 1860. In 1862, the gold-seekers were aided in their quest by the construction of the famous Cariboo Road. Built by a force of Royal Engineers at a cost of over \$1 million, the road provided easier access to the gold-fields of the northern interior. In 1866, one year after the road was completed, the Crown colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia were united. In 1869, the capital of the united colony was moved from New Westminster to Victoria, which remains the provincial capital to this day.

Union with Canada in 1871 came with the promise of a transcontinental railway to be built to the Pacific Coast. In 1881 the Canadian Pacific Railway was incorporated and, in 1885, the long line to the coast was complete. With the construction of the railway and the discovery of important mineral deposits the province's economy realized a much-needed boost in industrial development.

### B.C. TODAY

Today, British Columbia's principal industries are fishing, forestry, mining and manufacturing. Ranking second among the provinces in value of fish landed, B.C. is also a large producer of metals and forest products. In addition to its wealth of natural resources the land supports flourishing fruit and dairy farming in the southern regions of the province and beef-cattle raising in the northern interior, where some of the largest ranches in the country are found.

British Columbia ranks third in size among Canada's ten provinces, with a total area of 366,255 square miles. Of this, inland waters occupy 6,976 square miles, and over 73 per cent of the land area is forested. It is dominated by vast mountain ranges. Traversing the province from south to north are the Coast Mountains on the west and the Rocky Mountains on the east. Between these two ranges are the Columbia Mountains, comprising the Purcell, Selkirk, Monashee and Cariboo ranges. Further plateaux and ranges extend to and beyond the northern borders.

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An estimated 61.5 per cent of the full-time academic staff of 111 Canadian universities and colleges held Canadian citizenship in September 1970. Another 15.3 per cent held American citizenship and 10.1 per cent British. Among major fields of study Canadian citizenship varied from 70.3 per cent in the biological sciences to 50.5 per cent in languages.