

## Roberts Bank, British Columbia

# The first deepwater superport on the west coast opens

■ Off the coast of Vancouver three years ago you found boats and water. You still find them, but something has been added: a booming superport—and the west's only deepwater port—built on a 55-acre man-made island.

Experts predict that it is destined to become the busiest dry tonnage port, surpassing Vancouver, on the entire west coast.

Roberts Bank was dedicated by Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau in June on the site, 18 miles south and three miles west of Vancouver in the Strait of Georgia (see map).

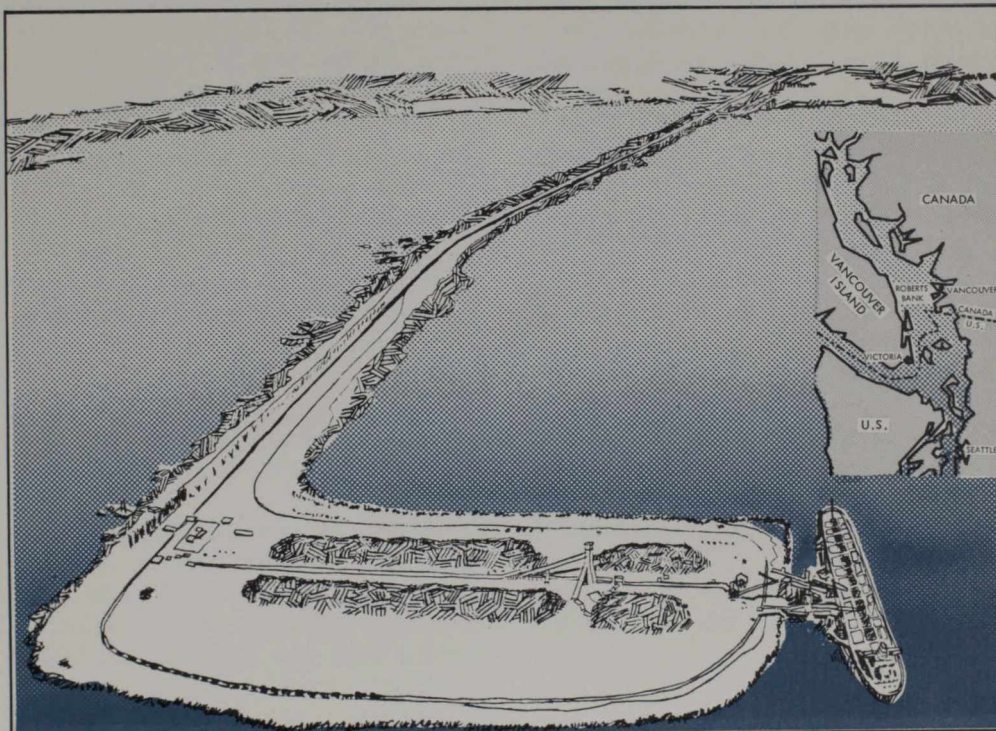
The Port is linked to mainland British Columbia by a narrow strip of land over which runs railway tracks, a 24-foot wide road, and service facilities.

Its terminal is a \$9 million high-speed coal depot built for Kaiser Resources Ltd., a subsidiary of Kaiser Steel Corp. of Oakland, Calif. The company mines the rejuvenated Crows Nest fields in the south eastern part of the province, 685 miles inland. The facility also stores and loads coal from other mining corporations whose sole contract markets also are the energy-hungry steel mills of Japan.

Other deep-water terminals, capable of taking mammoth bulk carriers up to 125,000 tons, are planned to handle the enormous flow of Canadian and U.S. raw materials that will supply the Orient from the Pacific Northwest.

To date the Canadian Government has spent \$5 million to dredge the silt from the tidal flats of the Strait of Georgia to a depth of 65 feet. This expenditure has provided the seed money that is attracting other venture capital. These investors are anxious to make a profit from the coal, sulphur, potash, copper, and other materials needed by Japan and other resource-poor nations on the 'Pacific Rim'.

The creation of Roberts Bank has produced a continuous flow of coal



At Roberts Bank near Vancouver, the world's largest deep-draft coal carriers dock beneath loading booms carrying coal from stockpiles.

from the Rockies to the sea. The target of 97,000 ton-miles per round trip hour will make its railroad the most efficient on the continent. But the whole scheme—the large-scale coal mining, the \$48 million Canadian Pacific railway, the multi-purpose superport—would have been considered preposterous less than a decade ago.

In the early 1960's rising transportation costs, obsolete labor-intensive mining technology, and radical changes in energy requirements were closing down coal mines in B.C.'s interior.

Then came Japan's phenomenal rise as a major steel producer, with production tripling in a decade and expected to double in the next.

New smelting furnaces were designed to make more efficient use of

coking coal. Massive-scale drag-line machines that work on the surface slashed mining costs. And superships capable of transporting B.C.'s coal to Japan at \$3.50 a ton became feasible.

B.C.'s enormous coal reserves, Japan's steelmaking boom, and the international trading instincts of firms in all three countries are expected to make Roberts Bank one of the main factors in changing the 'Pacific Rim's' trade pattern.

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