

In 1880 communication between Victoria and the mainland was made by two paddle wheel steamers owned by the Hudson's Bay Company, tri-weekly to New Westminster, and from thereon to Yale, the head of navigation on the Fraser River, in stern wheel boats. To Nanaimo a steamer ran twice a week. To northern ports a small steamer sailed occasionally when business offered. To Puget Sound a tri-weekly service was kept up by a small steamboat. Between Victoria and San Francisco a steamship carrying the Canadian mails arrived and departed every ten days. A subsidy in connection with this service was one of the conditions of the entry of British Columbia into confederation.

The trade between British Columbia and the Old Country, via Cape Horn, was carried on by sailing vessels.

In the light of present knowledge and past experience of the difficulties to navigation prevailing on the west coast of Vancouver Island, it is a matter of wonder that the early navigators, in almost complete ignorance of the conditions, escaped any serious mishaps.

The principal dangers to ships approaching the coast are two in number:

1. The prevalence of fogs caused by the vapour rising from the warm water of the Hiro Suva or Japanese current, which flows in a northerly direction laterally along the coast, coming in contact with the cool air from the snow-capped mountains of the coast.
2. Heavy gales in thick weather blowing on a lee shore and supplemented by the set of the Davidson or inshore current cause many ships to lose their bearings and go ashore, becoming total wrecks, even in these later days of greater knowledge, of improved appliances, and of lighthouses and fog horns. Vancouver Island, from Fort San Juan at the entrance to the Straits of Juan de Fuca, to Cape Scott at the northern end of the island, is strewn with wrecks, the greater number being south of Nootka Sound.

The first lighthouse built by the Dominion Government was that at Cape Beale in 1874, three years after the Province entered Confederation. Cape Beale lies at the southeasterly point of the entrance to Barclay Sound. It has fog alarm machinery in addition to the light. Between 1874 and the end of January, 1900, about seventeen lighthouses, seven lighted beacons and two gas buoys were established in addition to many daylight buoys and beacons.

At this date lighthouses and lights and other aids to navigation have been increased to 397. These extend from Victoria to the west coast of the island, to and through the Straits of Georgia to New Westminster and Vancouver, through the inter-island channels along the