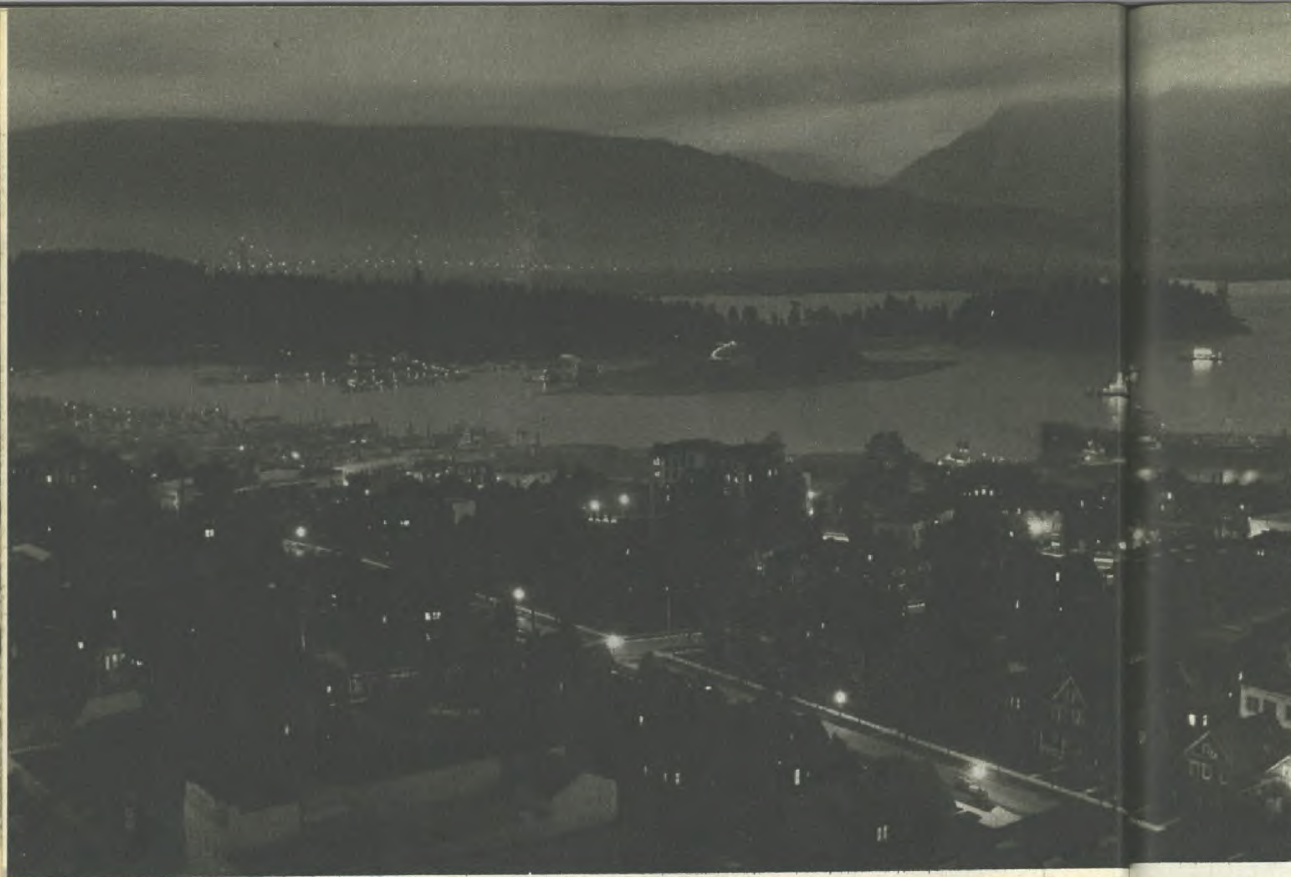




Dusk falls over Vancouver, Canada's great Pacific port.

By 1900, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, then Prime Minister, could proudly state: "I claim for Canada this: that in future Canada shall be at liberty to act or not to act . . . and that she shall reserve to herself the right to judge whether or not there is cause for her to act . . . in the plenitude, in the majesty of our colonial legislative independence."

When war broke out in 1914, Canada quickly supported the cause of the Allies. In four years Canada's Army increased two hundredfold and the battle record of that Army—at Ypres, on the Somme, at Amiens, at Passchendaele, Vimy Ridge, and in the final advance to Mons—became a legend. Industrial production was so developed that, in all, more than \$1 billion worth of war material was shipped from Canada.

This outstanding contribution of Canada brought about significant constitutional consequences. The Canadian Prime Minister, Sir Robert Borden, signed the peace treaties on behalf of Canada as a sovereign power. Canada led the other British Dominions in the successful claim for individual membership in the League of Nations.

The new autonomy was formally defined at the Imperial Conference in 1926. With reference to Great Britain and the Dominions, it was stated:

"They are autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations."

These principles were embodied in the Statute of Westminster, passed by the British Parliament in 1931, and it was in accordance with these principles that Canada participated in the Second World War as a completely independent and sovereign nation. War was declared by the United Kingdom on September 3, 1939. On September 10, a special session of the Canadian Parliament declared that a state of war existed between Canada and Nazi Germany. Ten months later war was declared on Italy and on December 7, 1941, a few hours after the attack on Pearl Harbour, Canada was officially at war with Japan.

A prodigious mobilization of Canadian resources and manpower followed. By the end of the war the personnel of the Royal Canadian Navy had increased from 1,700 to 95,000; between 1939 and 1945 the Army enlisted some 730,000 persons; the operational strength of the Royal Canadian Air Force in all theatres of war grew to over sixty squadrons and its total enlistment reached 206,350. Canada also developed, administered, and largely financed the Commonwealth Air Training Plan for the air forces of the Commonwealth countries; 131,553 aircrew, about 38 per cent of whom were pilots, were trained through this organization. More than 50,000 Canadian women enlisted in the three armed services. Canada's Merchant Navy increased in personnel from 1,460 to more than 8,000 in these six years. In all, over a million men and women—forty men out of every one hundred between

The main street of Dawson City, Yukon Territory.

