

and lakes.

In twenty years, the argument had moved to the other coast, to the rich but sparsely settled Oregon Territory, stretching from the 42nd parallel to the 59th and including the northern parts of the future states of Washington, Oregon and Idaho, and the southern slice of British Columbia. The Americans wanted to own it. The British, or more particularly the Hudson Bay Company, just wanted to trade and hunt.

Capt. John Gordon and the 55-gun British frigate, the *America*, came to Puget Sound to show the flag and support the Company but Gordon was more interested in salmon fishing. He caught none. "The old Gentleman was exceedingly kind," the Hudson Bay man wrote home, "but no wise enthusiastic about Oregon. . . . He does not think the country worth five straws."

It became apparent that while U.S. President Polk, despite the slogan "Fifty-Four Forty, or Fight," was willing to draw the line at the 49th parallel, many Londoners were opposed to settlement, including the *London Times*. But in the early days of 1846 the *Times* — spokesman for the Foreign Office — reversed its position and carried three editorials advocating the forty-ninth parallel plus all of Vancouver Island.

Both sides were now seeking the same boundary and only diplomatic etiquette stood in the way. It was overcome.

The boundary having been fixed by treaty remained to be fixed in fact. The surveys began and, in the words of Canadian historian H. George Classen, "there was only the barest essential minimum of collaboration between the parties."

The going was tough since the 49th parallel ran over precipitous mountains and in the Cascades perpetual snow covered the peaks and glaciers filled the gorges. The forests of virgin fir and pine were often impassable and Lieut. Charles W. Wilson, of the Royal Engineers, wrote in his diary about the mosquitos, ". . . one's hands are literally covered with them when writing and even when wearing kid gloves, the bites come through the needle holes in the seams . . . two mules have been blinded and six of our horses were so reduced that we had to turn them out onto the prairie and let them take their chance of living . . . all of us as you may imagine were a good deal pulled down."

The surveying was to continue, off and on, for the next seventy years and three surveyors, all Canadians, would die, two in a landslide and one when he walked too close to the edge of a cornice hanging over a valley; two thousand feet down. But the cooperation improved. The surveyors left the "line houses," homes, barns, sheds, stores, post offices and such, which stand on top of the border, extending into both lands. During the American Prohibition these often became international meeting places, with Canadian bartenders at one end of the room and American customers coming in the other.

The Treaty of 1925 established the International Boundary Commission, which maintains small offices in Ottawa and Washington and each year sends out work parties to keep clear the twenty-foot wide "vistas" which straddle the border through the forests.

The disputes of the present and the future reflect not the hunger of a few men for great tracts of land, but the push and shove of many men.

## Insulin Anniversary

In the hot and sticky summer of 1921, Charles Best and Frederick Banting, two young and broke doctors, worked endless hours in a borrowed lab at the University of Toronto.

They shared the idea that somewhere in the human body was a secretion which controlled the body's use of sugar and that it could be used to control diabetes, then a common killer of children.

Dr. Banting was forced to sell his car to buy experimental dogs and keep them fed. They cleaned out the animal cages, did their own tests, and slept and ate on the premises.

They had six weeks to succeed, the limited period for which the University's skeptical professor of physiology had loaned them the lab.

They had concluded, correctly, that the secretion they sought was in the pancreas, an organ lying behind the stomach in all mammals. In

1889, Oscar Minkowski, of Strasbourg, had discovered that when a dog's pancreas was removed the dog died of diabetes.

By the end of the summer the two young doctors had extracted insulin. Within six months it was purified enough to save the life of a fourteen-year-old boy.

Dr. Best, now 73, is professor emeritus at the University of Toronto, where he has devoted a long life to research and has made major contributions in other fields of physiology.

Dr. Banting was killed in an air crash in 1941.

From October 25 to 27 the University will mark the 50th Anniversary of the Best and Banting discovery with an International Hormone Conference which will bring scientists from around the world.