

employ by that name. A reflection of this alleged discovery is found in the annals of English discovery when in 1660 their famous navigator Henry Hudson, in his little ship the *Discovery*, searching for this mythical passage, entered the bay that bears his name and perished in his attempt to solve it.

It was not until the eighteenth century that discoveries on the Pacific coast began to take definite form. In 1728-29 Vitus Behring, a Dane, exploring for the Russian Government, sailed north through the strait that now bears his name, thus proving a passage from the Pacific, not to the Atlantic, but to the Arctic. In 1741, in company with Chirikoff, he discovered Alaska and took possession of it for the Russians.

The year 1778 witnessed the return of British explorers when Capt. James Cook, searching still for the "northwest passage," landed at Nootka, on Vancouver island. The closing years of this century saw the race for national supremacy in these regions in full swing. Between 1774 and 1779 Spanish and Mexican explorers were particularly active on the coast. In 1787 Admiral LaPerouse led a French expedition into these waters. The following year the United States of America, the new nation of the new world, despatched a ship to the scene.

English and Spanish claims on Vancouver island threatened for a time to lead to trouble, but were finally settled by the Nootka Convention of 1790, in which Spain gave up her claims at this port to the English. In 1792 Narvez, a Spanish pilot, discovered the mouth of the Fraser river, and the same year Capt. Gray discovered the Columbia and took possession of it for the United States. Meanwhile Capt. Vancouver was exploring in the vicinity of Puget sound and had it not been for the presence of heavy fogs would have anticipated Gray by a couple of weeks, having passed the mouth of the Columbia without being able to see it.

The French did not follow up any discoveries on this coast, and the Spanish, through lack of ships, withdrew to the more southerly shores. The close of the eighteenth century saw the Russians holding Alaska and the coast from Sitka north, the English practically established from that point as far south as Puget sound and disputing with the Americans the possession of these regions, and the Americans and Spanish holding the southern coast.

The British claim to the great interior, however, was made secure when in 1793 Alexander Mackenzie, a partner of the great Northwest fur trading company, rounded the Peace river and its southerly branch the Parsnip, crossed to the Fraser and after following it for some distance below its confluence with the Nechako, turned west and made his way to the waters of the Pacific which he reached at Bellakula. This great feat solved the mystery of the hidden lands beyond the mountains, opened up the way for the extension of the fur trade and the occupation of the coast districts and established beyond question the right of the British claim to these lands. For his great service to the Empire Mackenzie was knighted.

The period of discovery closes with the eighteenth century and the period of exploration and occupation commences with the nineteenth. Overland and by sea the rush to the new land began. The Northwest Company lost no time in taking advantage of the new field at their disposal. Fort MacLeod was established in 1805, Fort St. James and Fort Fraser in 1806, and Fort George in 1807. In 1808, Simon Fraser made his famous descent of the Fraser river.