

1

Boosterism and Early Tourism Promotion in British Columbia, 1890-1930

It is the common remark of visitors from the United States that Victorians have mastered the art of combining business with pleasure.

— British Columbia Board of Trade, *Victoria, British Columbia: Past and Present*, c. 1900

Order and Opportunity

In a 1921 article for the “Women’s Section” of *Saturday Night* magazine, Irene Todd recounted her journey along the Pacific Coast from Prince Rupert to Vancouver.¹ The attractions and events that Todd chose to highlight for the magazine’s readers were in some ways predictable. Near Prince Rupert, for example, Todd drew her readers’ attention to the “softly breathing sea” and the “shaggy islands over which a few stars kept watch.” Farther south she enthusiastically paid tribute to the way in which a sunrise “broke over the snowy summits of the mountains of British Columbia tinging them with crimson and gold.” Nor could she forget “the beauty of those early morning hours as we glided over the pearly waters down that winding passage between two quivering walls of vivid green formed by the steep spruce clad banks.”² British Columbia’s natural beauties were clearly a significant part of her travel experience.

More surprising, perhaps, was Todd’s emphasis on more utilitarian attractions. As prominent as the anecdotes about natural attractions in her article were descriptions of industrial and technological achievements. The Grand Trunk Pacific steamer that transported Todd and the other passengers was, in her recollection, “shining and trim, glistening with light from stem to stern, her engines throbbing in eagerness to be off on her 800 mile journey through the fiords and inlets of the North Pacific coast.” Prince Rupert Harbour itself was also worthy of sustained comment: “The longshoremen hurried to and fro, stowing away great loads of freight ... There was the whine of block and tackle, the clanking of chains, the splash of water against the wharves, and the chug-chug of the gasoline engines of the halibut fishing boats, and the Indian Salmon fishing boats, that lay out in the path of the moon.” A stop to take on passengers at Swanson Bay was also worthy of a detailed retelling. Swanson Bay, after all, boasted “one of the largest industries on the Pacific

Coast" – Whalen Pulp and Paper Mills – and employed 700 people. On this trip, then, industry also sparked Todd's interest.³

Most interesting here is the manner in which Todd intertwined observations about nature and industry. For her, the steamer, no less than the snow-capped mountains, was, in her account, deserving of attention, and her focus seems to have been as much on the industrial possibilities of her travel destination as on its natural setting. In her article, both aspects of modernity are given voice: an angst-ridden search for escape into nature, and a celebration of and fascination with the twin driving forces of the modern world, technology and capitalism.⁴ The ease with which Todd reconciled the splendour of the natural world and the wonders of technology is reminiscent of what Leo Marx has identified as "the rhetoric of the technological sublime."⁵ As David Louter has recently demonstrated, some early-twentieth-century tourists to the American west saw no difficulty in reconciling the most modern of machines, the automobile, with the region's natural wonders. For such travellers, the automobile offered convenient access to national parks and mountains, with minimal impact upon the environment when compared with the effects of railways. Seen "in this light," Louter explains, "parks were a kind of national commons for nature and machines."⁶

Todd, then, was not alone. In fact, her motivations for travelling and recording her experiences were shared by many other travellers in British Columbia between 1890 and 1930. Some were local residents and journalists anxious to publicize the province; many more were visitors from afar keen to detail their experiences for the magazine-buying public. By examining what these writers chose to highlight and how they responded to the natural and human-made attractions that they visited, it is possible to get a sense of why people toured British Columbia in the early part of the twentieth century. Such accounts are particularly important because during this era there was, for the most part, no accurate way of measuring tourist demand or even the number of tourists visiting the province. Tourism promoters anxious to expand the tourist trade would likely have consulted, as we are about to do, the pages of major periodicals such as *Saturday Night*, *Maclean's*, and *Sunset* to glean an understanding of why tourists travelled and what could be done to encourage more of them to visit the province.⁷

This chapter focuses on both tourists and tourism promoters in order to illustrate an important but overlooked aspect of the history of tourism. While contemporary tourism promotion efforts are measured primarily by the amount of money that visitors are convinced to spend at a given destination, early tourism promotion in British Columbia had a different rationale – one closely related to boosterism. Many travellers sought to evade the debilitating effects of modern life by retreating to the province's

wilderness. But, like Todd, they were also intrigued by the economic opportunities and the wonders of industrial production that they saw in British Columbia. Analyzing the activities of tourists and tourism promoters during this era gives us a window onto the nature of tourism before it was incorporated into a burgeoning culture of consumption.

To date, research on tourism and tourism promotion in Canada during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has emphasized the extent to which tourism promoters recognized tourists' desire to escape the modern world in favour of wilderness adventures.⁸ In Atlantic Canada, the region most studied by tourism scholars, the tourist trade was seen as an alternative to the fishery and a means of diversifying local economies. Local clubs and government regulators endeavoured to set aside a significant portion of the region's fish and game for visiting American tourists, who were willing to pay handsomely for the privilege of gaining access to the region's wildlife resources. These promotional efforts focused on the benefits of obtaining a direct but temporary infusion of cash from visiting American hunters and fishers.⁹ Nascent tourism promotion bodies in British Columbia, however, saw tourism as a strategy for luring settlers and agricultural and industrial development to the province. They shared this approach with booster organizations throughout western Canada that advertised their towns and cities as wilderness preserves in the hope that deep-pocketed eastern investors would be convinced to settle in the west.¹⁰ This recognition of tourism as a catalyst for industrial development was not unique to Canada. During the interwar years, South Africa employed tourism promotion as a method of luring American capitalists to its shores.¹¹ Similarly, in the years leading up to its independence in 1962, government officials in Jamaica attempted to secure much-needed American investment by tailoring the colony's tercentenary celebrations to suit the sensibilities of American tourists.¹² The political climate of both South Africa in the 1920s and Jamaica in the 1950s focused explicitly on nation building and the exporting of natural resources. It also reflected a sense of optimism about future resource development. The similarities to British Columbia at the turn of the century are striking. In a recent survey of late-nineteenth-century British Columbia politics, R.A.J. McDonald has urged historians to recognize the extent to which the province's politicians embraced the possibilities of modernity.¹³ Moreover, as Jean Barman notes, the turn of the century marked a period of growing self-confidence as provincial leaders eagerly anticipated a resource extraction boom.¹⁴ Such anticipation reflected a sense of optimism about the province's economic future. It was very likely this optimism that encouraged British Columbians to see tourism as a catalyst, rather than an alternative, to industrial and agricultural development. To this end, organizations in Victoria and Vancouver sought to capitalize upon tourists' ambiguous

reactions to the modern world. Indeed, while much of the historical literature examining public reaction to the onset of modernity in North America focuses primarily on the search for *order* in this period of dramatic change brought about by industrial capitalism,¹⁵ the evidence from British Columbia suggests that North Americans were equally as determined in their search for something else: *opportunity*.

Evading Modernity

Many tourists travelled to escape the hectic pace of modern life – at least temporarily. In a 1908 article appearing in *Saturday Night* magazine, for example, P.A. O'Farrell of New York City saw in British Columbia's Arrow Lake country the opportunity to temporarily trade the hustle and bustle of the "Big Apple" for the relaxing sight of orchards, gardens, and lawns. In contemplating the building of a chalet near the mountains, O'Farrell hoped to "escape from that species of tiger hunt that prevails in Wall Street."¹⁶ Poet and travel writer Ernest McGaffey was more ambiguous in his evaluation of the modern world. In a 1913 article for *Sunset* magazine, McGaffey hailed Vancouver Island as a place where "a Modern Metropolis Touches the Margin of a Pristine Wilderness." Victoria, he trumpeted, was a place where "Scenery and Commerce Meet." The island's properties, McGaffey explained, made it an ideal destination for world-weary citizens of North America – albeit one in which they could maintain contact with the world of commerce.¹⁷ Both O'Farrell and McGaffey celebrated British Columbia's restorative powers, and their observations were echoed many times over by other travellers.

Recording her 1915 trip to the Kootenays for *Maclean's* magazine, for example, Mrs. Arthur Spragge, the author of an earlier book describing her 1887 trip from Ontario to the Pacific Coast via the Canadian Pacific Railway, praised the region's dry air and sporting opportunities but paid particular tribute to Sinclair Hot Springs, which possessed radium for fighting disease.¹⁸ This concern for the health-giving properties of vacation destinations was widely shared.¹⁹ "If the open road fever seizes you," E.A. Vandeventer encouraged readers of *Sunset* magazine in 1925, "do not resist it, for nothing links health building with pleasure more surely than does change of scenery and climate in the fresh air."²⁰ In a 1928 report on ski-jumping in Revelstoke for *Maclean's*, J.E. March noted the growing popularity of skiing as an antidote to the drudgery of an increasingly bureaucratized world. In earlier times, March noted, the actual skiing had been left "to the stark enthusiasts; now everybody does it." "Important and portly men who seriously and solemnly manage every kind of business," March reported, "now spend a week or two each winter attempting feats which almost appal[] their children."²¹

The same year *Saturday Night* offered a lengthy list of the health

advantages that could be secured by visiting British Columbia. Its coastal mountain range, for example, offered a bevy of winter sports, including skiing, tobogganing, and snowshoeing. In reminding its readers of the important role of play in daily life, the magazine pointed to the many opportunities that existed in the province for big-game hunting, sailing, fishing, and golfing. Less active readers could make use of Vancouver's many beaches. Vancouver was, after all, "one of the healthiest cities on the North American Continent. Its climate, the geographical situation, its modernity all help to make it so, but there is added to those factors the magnificent sea bathing which every citizen and visitor alike enjoy." The properties of the Pacific Ocean, according to the author, not only improved one's health but also encouraged one to relax and have fun: "The waters of the mid-North Pacific Ocean have a refreshing buoyancy, an invigorating tang which assist[s] the thousands of visitors to enjoy the many beaches." Victoria also boasted many beaches. In fact, the two cities in combination supplied such a generous choice of beaches for visitors that, in the eyes of *Saturday Night*, the visitor to British Columbia could not fail "to enjoy the sparkling waters with their health-giving and refreshing properties."²²

According to some observers, a vacation's health-giving properties also played a key role in maintaining an *orderly* and productive society.²³ In a 1904 article for *Sunset* magazine, for example, George Eldredge underscored the importance of vacations, not just for the vacationer, but also for society in general. In his view, vacations contributed to self-improvement and efficiency – two key attributes for the modern person. According to Eldredge, a man was either a productive citizen striving for self-improvement or a "shirk" who held back society by "taking out of the common fund all he can and paying back less than he can." The deliberately lazy were "vagrants – no matter whether he [sic] be clothed in rags or in broad-cloth – a foe to mankind" – and as such deserved, and received, little sympathy or support from the state. Eldredge had little time for this group. His attention was directed instead to another, less recognized type of "shirk." Many men remained unproductive, he explained, not through laziness but through ignorance. "There is one false idea which prevails among this unfortunate class of men which is very largely responsible for the smallness of result in their lives," Eldredge explained, "the idea that a man can work 365 days in a year and accomplish good results." Rest and relaxation were necessary ingredients in production. Quite aside from religious considerations, he suggested, productive citizens required "one day of rest in every seven" and should "spend that day in the way best calculated to refresh his whole nature." "The man who is ambitious to do the most and best work will," Eldredge argued, "if he be wise, take a month out of his summer each year and invest it in pure air and

sunshine." Like a well-harvested field, the productive citizen then should "let himself lie fallow for four weeks; and then go back to his business with zest and earnestness, to accomplish more in the next eleven months than he could possibly have done in all the twelve otherwise."²⁴

A quarter of a century later, in 1929, *Sunset's* advice for readers remained largely unchanged. To alleviate the high number of suicides and mental health problems among businesspeople, household science expert Gladys Denny Shultz urged the magazine's readers to divert themselves from "this strange devotion to coins and bits of paper." Businesspeople, Shultz advised, should concentrate more on the challenge of competing in business than on the monetary aspects of their occupation. Moreover, Shultz echoed Eldredge's call for more emphasis on rest and enjoyment away from the workplace. In her discussion of a dedicated yet unproductive female worker, she explained that the woman worked "like a slave, getting through mountains of detail, staying overtime, working herself into a state of nervous irritability, working gray hair into her head and worried lines into her forehead. Working so hard, all the time, in fact, that she loses her perspective entirely and has nothing fresh to contribute to anything." Rest, relaxation, and play provided the necessary antidote to this condition, she argued, by improving one's mental health and workplace productivity.²⁵

It would be overly simplistic, of course, to assume that visits to British Columbia were undertaken purely in pursuit of a calculated period of rest. Focusing again on travellers' experiences as they were recorded in magazines provides insight into how these visitors themselves represented their experiences and their relationships to the natural and technological wonders that they were viewing. Travellers to British Columbia shared a pursuit common to many other travellers of the era: a desire for sublime experience.²⁶

A 1913 trip to Capilano Canyon just north of Vancouver, for example, allowed Toronto journalist Mary Adelaide Snider to immerse herself in nature and escape from the pressing concerns of daily life. Peering in awe at the gigantic skunk cabbage and dandelions, Snider reported, "you feel like Alice in Wonderland, you are so small by comparison with familiar things." When she crossed the bridge into the centre of the canyon, her removal from modern life was complete: "Forgotten are your perplexities – forgotten everything – there is *nobody* in the universe." A venture across a gorge on a narrow plank produced just the sensation she sought: "You do not care. You are uplifted above fear by the wonder of the woods."²⁷

Kitty Hardcastle's 1913 trip to the Rockies produced similar results. "Amidst the impressive grandeur of that mountain scenery how finite mere humans seemed!" she mused. Hardcastle experienced the "ecstasy of inhaling the pure mountain air" and embraced the opportunity "to

sense the solitude and listen to the mountain sounds all indescribably sweet."²⁸ Ernest McGaffey also found it difficult to find the words to describe the scenery on Vancouver Island. He was awed by the island's "rivers and canyons savage in their grandeur and beauty, and forests gray with the rime of ages."²⁹

For many travellers, the natural surroundings provided a religious allure. E.A. Powell found the scenery along the Island Highway so impressive "that we felt a trifle awed and spoke in whispers when we spoke at all, as though we were in the nave of a great cathedral."³⁰ When the journalist and future wheat financier Norman Lambert visited the Rockies in 1915, words failed him in his attempt to record the scene: "Description is futile," he wrote, "because the experience is not one of the eye and the senses: it is spiritual."³¹ Face to face with the mountains and gigantic trees of Bella Coola, Guy Rhoades was awed into silence. He described himself as "helpless" and at first unable to convey the beauty of the area. Having recovered enough to write down his thoughts, he announced that "here one can feel the presence of the spirits of the upper world, and one begins to realise how logical the religious beliefs of the Indians really are."³² Nature, however, was not the only antidote to the enervating side effects of modernity. Former "boom" towns could offer reassurance as well. In 1922 Charles Lugin Shaw found serenity in the most peaceful of places: the Barkerville graveyard. For Shaw, the graveyard "seemed to fit in as one of the obvious features, because here was the place where people lived in the past, where the slightest suggestion of the modern seemed like an intrusion."³³

Clearly, then, one overwhelming motivating factor for tourists in British Columbia before 1930 was the desire to escape from the hustle and bustle of the modern world. Many early travellers to British Columbia shared a desire to escape from the repetitiveness and dreariness of daily life. This yearning for causal potency and authentic experience has been noted by other scholars focusing on other contexts and activities ranging from the private correspondence and published writings of English Canadian imperialists living in Montreal to art aficionados in Toronto eager to celebrate Tom Thomson's manly virtues.³⁴ Similarly, in the American context, Anne Farrar Hyde has argued that, between 1885 and 1915, "many people began to question assumptions about the gifts of modernity and technology."³⁵ The travellers' accounts of British Columbia detailed here emphasize, in many ways, the breadth of this antimodern yearning in Canada between 1890 and 1930.

Embracing Modernity

Yet there are elements in these travellers' tales that jar with their anti-modern rhetoric. To be sure, these writers advocated vacations to promote

physical recovery and offered their readers detailed retellings of their spiritual communions with the province's sublime mountain scenery. However, their feelings of awe toward the sublimity of nature also engendered a desire to conquer the very topography that produced these feelings. For example, when fish and game enthusiast Edward Sandys visited the Great Asulkan Glacier near Rogers Pass in 1890, he recorded not only his tribute to the sublime health-restoring scenery but that of his American travelling partner as well. In doing so, he also alluded to an "indescribable sense of awe" in peering up at the glacier. When Sandys suggested climbing the glacier itself, his "little" American companion bowed out. Sandys proceeded to climb partway up the side of the glacier and then slid down "toboggan style." There coexisted within Sandys and many other travellers both an admiration for nature and a desire to conquer the landscape to which they had retreated.³⁶ W.E. Raney's 1899 trip along the Old Cariboo Road was also punctuated by a dangerous encounter with nature, and Raney too employed the theme of American inferiority in recounting his tale. Informed that two Americans from New York had proclaimed themselves scared of the dangerous road from Lillooet to Golden Cache, Raney felt obliged to tackle the route and boasted of his accomplishment.³⁷ The sense of superiority and causal potency that came with conquering one's fear was not solely the domain of male travellers. On her 1913 trip to the Rockies, Kitty Hardcastle savoured the opportunity to demonstrate her bravery. When several other female travellers panicked the night before a scheduled trip to see the Takakkaw Falls, Hardcastle and her companion relished the opportunity to reassure them of their safety.³⁸

Waterfalls and glaciers were not the only natural wonders that intimidated and provoked travellers in British Columbia; less remarkable sections of the landscape evoked similar feelings. In his retelling of the Vancouver Automobile Club's 1922 trip through Southern British Columbia, Percy Gomery offered readers a rugged tale of individual achievement: "Travelling by motor-boat, row-boat, dugout canoe, wagon, pack-horse and for two score miles struggling unaided through deserted and overgrown trails," he explained, his party triumphed over the province's mountainous geography.³⁹

Travel writer E.A. Powell was convinced that conquest over nature could come in more portable and tasty forms. In response to his colleague's complaint that they had done little hunting or fishing during their journey up the Pacific Coast from Mexico, Powell challenged his travelling companion (and *Sunset's* readers) to just wait "until we get over to Vancouver island. You won't need to unstrap your fishing rods or your gun either. A man I know told me that up in the unfrequented interior of the island you can spear salmon with a pitchfork and kill all the pheasants you want with a club."⁴⁰

22 *Boosterism and Early Tourism Promotion in British Columbia, 1890-1930*

Another method of conquering nature was through the collection of knowledge. In a manner reminiscent of eighteenth-century European travel writers who diligently recorded the characteristics of their colonial possessions, visitors to British Columbia detailed the province's natural properties for their readers.⁴¹ Bird enthusiast Hamilton M. Laing, for instance, dedicated his entire 1920 tour between Hope and Princeton to a detailed examination and recording of the wide variety of flowers found in the region.⁴² Interest in science was not restricted, of course, to botany. A reporter visiting the Cariboo Road for *Saturday Night* found equally fascinating the ways in which science was employed to find gold and other minerals.⁴³ Mary Adelaide Snider's 1913 trip to Capilano Canyon was incomplete, her guide insisted, without a detailed explanation and exploration of the nearby timber flume.⁴⁴

Often an interest in conquering or controlling nature combined with a fascination with scientific achievements to produce, in many travellers' accounts, a list of entrepreneurial opportunities in agriculture and industry for their readers to contemplate. During his journey along the Cariboo Trail, for example, E.A. Powell took time to explain to his readers the immense impact that the Grand Trunk Pacific was bound to have on the province. When completed, he explained, it "will open up to civilization and exploitation the rich mines and vast forests of northern British Columbia and the limitless prairies of the Peace river country."⁴⁵ Mrs. Arthur Spragge's 1915 journey to Golden allowed her the opportunity to document the region's improving irrigation system and declare that small fortunes were to be made growing fruits and vegetables.⁴⁶ Norman Lambert drew his readers' attention to the various canneries and copper deposits near Hazelton.⁴⁷ Frequently a tribute to the province's climate was combined with an example of a success story to emphasize the economic opportunities present. P.A. O'Farrell found the climate and soil of the Arrow Lake country to be "all that are desirable for men or women who love open air life and bracing mountain air, and an occasional hunt for cariboo and elk." "One rancher told me," he continued, "that he realized 800 dollars off one acre of fruit."⁴⁸

These visitors to British Columbia were not simply rebelling against the enervating effects of modern life; they were, in fact, fascinated by the possibilities of modern technology, and they certainly were not averse to contemplating ways to capitalize and profit from the natural world to which they were temporarily retreating. As such, these travellers took a utilitarian approach to tourism – one that had been popular throughout the eighteenth century. As Ian Ousby explains, eighteenth-century travellers were motivated not by nostalgia but by a desire to investigate and experience the scientific advancements of the modern world. Motivated as they were by this spirit of enquiry, such travellers placed a great deal

of importance on firsthand, empirical knowledge.⁴⁹ Early travellers to British Columbia thus combined their desire to temporarily evade the debilitating effects of modern life with a keen interest in locating and embracing industrial and agricultural opportunities.⁵⁰

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, civic leaders in Victoria and Vancouver worked diligently to attract as many visitors as possible. They did so with the hope that even a brief visit to the province would convince these travellers to invest and settle in British Columbia. As the articles appearing in magazines such as *Maclean's*, *Saturday Night*, and *Sunset* suggest, many nineteenth-century visitors to British Columbia were drawn to a great extent to the province's hinterland. Communication requirements along with more tangible advantages such as roads ensured that British Columbia's two largest centres, Victoria and Vancouver, led the way in tourism promotion and that these two cities reaped most of the benefits that such promotional efforts produced.

Victoria, Vancouver, and the Establishment of Civic Tourist Associations

While British Columbia's entry into Confederation in 1871 alleviated several financial problems plaguing the former Crown colony, it left Canada's newest province in a precarious position. The Confederation agreement relieved the province of its mounting debt, but it did not immediately solve British Columbia's most pressing requirement: economic development. During the last three decades of the nineteenth century, governing coalitions in the province's Legislative Assembly focused their efforts on securing population and investment capital for the province. The chief means of obtaining these ingredients for economic development was a permanent transportation link with eastern North America – a link finally provided by the eventual completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) in 1885.

Between the founding of Vancouver in 1886 as the CPR's western terminus and the outbreak of the Great War, R.A.J. McDonald has argued, British Columbia "was transformed economically from an outward-looking maritime society connected by the Pacific Ocean to California, Great Britain, and various points on the Pacific Rim, into an inward-looking continental community." The catalysts for this reorientation were the railways. Completion of the Central Pacific Railway at San Francisco in 1869 was supplemented, between 1883 and 1893, by the completion of three other transcontinental railways farther north in the Pacific Northwest.⁵¹ Completion of transcontinental railway lines to the US Pacific Northwest in the early 1880s meant that it was now practical for local boosters "to lure tourists along with home seekers and investors" to Idaho, Washington, and Oregon.⁵² Similarly, the completion of the CPR provided civic leaders in

Victoria and the new city of Vancouver with a much more efficient means of luring potential settlers to their settlements.

The CPR, like other North American railways, had identified tourism as an important source of supplementary income to help alleviate the company's mounting debt. Throughout the late nineteenth century, railway companies in the western United States built hotels along their lines to capitalize upon the American public's growing interest in transcontinental travel.⁵³ The Southern Pacific Railroad's Hotel Del Monte in Monterey (opened in 1880), the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad's Antlers Hotel in Colorado Springs (opened in 1881), and the Northern Pacific's Canyon Hotel (built in 1913), which overlooked the Grand Canyon, all offered well-to-do tourists stately and comfortable accommodation for their travel adventures. Between 1896 and 1920, in fact, the Santa Fe Railroad built no fewer than seventeen large hotels.⁵⁴ Similarly, the CPR commenced construction on three restaurant stops in British Columbia in 1886 (Mount Stephen House at Field, Glacier House near Rogers Pass, and Fraser Canyon House at North Bend), each of which contained six or seven bedrooms. Construction on a much larger hotel in Vancouver began in July 1886, and the Hotel Vancouver opened its doors to visitors in May 1887. A few months later work was completed on the Banff Springs Hotel in Alberta.⁵⁵ By the first decade of the twentieth century, these hotels would combine with others, such as the Chateau Frontenac in Quebec (completed in 1893) and the Algonquin Hotel in St. Andrew's, New Brunswick (brought under CPR management in 1905), to give the company a network of hotels across the country.

The CPR had another effect, of course, on the provincial economy. Bolstered by its position as the CPR's western terminus, Vancouver supplanted the provincial capital of Victoria as the province's leading port, and throughout the 1890s Victoria's economy was outpaced by Vancouver's. In 1890, Victoria's exports were six times greater than Vancouver's. By 1903, these positions were dramatically reversed, and Vancouver's exports exceeded Victoria's by a ratio of three to one.⁵⁶ It was in this context that the province's capital city embraced the possibilities of civic boosterism.

In the competition to lure industrial development and settlers at the turn of the century, cities throughout North America conducted publicity campaigns championing their local amenities and promising tax concessions and monetary grants to companies willing to set up shop within their boundaries. Between 1907 and 1915, for example, the town of Maison-neuve, Quebec, undertook a systematic newspaper advertising campaign supplemented with several promotional pamphlets in an attempt to lure industry to what local officials claimed was "Le Pittsburg du Canada."⁵⁷ Coexisting with this desire to promote urban growth, however, was a concern about the dangers of urbanization. Disease, crime, prostitution, and

“rampant materialism” were all seen as evil by-products of city life. In response, urban reformers launched “collectivist” campaigns to clean up urban centres in an attempt “to impose order on the chaos of city life.” By 1900 the beautification of the city, through the creation of parks and wide boulevards, had emerged as a popular solution to the problems and perils of city life.⁵⁸

While civic leaders in eastern urban centres embarked upon urban reform campaigns, many civic leaders in the nascent communities of the west engaged in beautification programs in order to attract investment and settlement. Between 1890 and 1910, civic leaders in Seattle were motivated to construct “an attractive system of parks and boulevards” and to advertise these amenities “not ... so much from a spirit of reform as from a desire for commercial growth, civic pride, and a spirit of rivalry with other Northwest cities.”⁵⁹ Similar motivations among civic leaders on the Canadian Prairies during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries resulted in a sustained period of boosterism in which community leaders embarked upon vigorous campaigns to improve local infrastructure and lure investment in an attempt to foster economic growth.⁶⁰ Frequently such campaigns emphasized the city’s favourable living conditions. Civic leaders in Saskatoon, for example, attempted to offer prospective residents an inviting and reassuring image of the city by promoting its local parks, hotels, and bridges. Such symbols, David Neufeld explains, offered potential newcomers a vision of Saskatoon that emphasized opportunities for financial gain in an attractive but secure setting.⁶¹

British Columbia’s capital city was not immune to this spirit of boosterism. Among the earliest attempts to publicize Victoria was the 1891 booklet *Victoria Illustrated*, published by the *Colonist* newspaper. This booklet was dedicated to selling the city’s industrial, agricultural, and settlement opportunities to outsiders. Focusing chiefly on the city’s “natural advantages,” *Victoria Illustrated* reflected the booster spirit of the time. Along with writing lengthy profiles of economic opportunities ranging from mining and fishing to agriculture and wholesale trade, its authors did their best to underscore the advantageous living conditions that the city offered. They highlighted both the “salubrity” of the city’s climate and its “pastoral” yet “majestic” setting in an attempt to lure investors to Victoria. Detailed monthly rainfall and temperature charts were included as statistical proof of the city’s climatic health-giving advantages.⁶²

Early city boosters elsewhere along the Pacific Coast produced similar promotional material. A January 1893 issue of *Facts Seattle* produced by the Seattle Chamber of Commerce highlighted for potential settlers evidence of the city’s population growth, noted its superior climate, and listed among its amenities a plethora of schools, churches, and banks. The potential investor was informed that the “principal resources within

a radius of 120 miles of Seattle, and tributary thereto, are the immense growth of superior timber, vast deposits of iron and coal ... precious metals, stone and lime," while opportunities also existed in "agriculture, fishing, manufacturing and shipping." The pamphlet also highlighted the city's two transcontinental railway connections to the eastern United States.⁶³

Facts Seattle was part of a sustained campaign undertaken by civic leaders in Seattle between 1890 and 1910 in which organizations such as the Seattle Chamber of Commerce distributed promotional literature aimed at luring settlers and investors to the city.⁶⁴ The most successful promotional campaign of the era, however, belonged to the city of Los Angeles. Between the 1860s and the 1930s, Los Angeles was transformed from a small town with dirt streets to the fourth largest urban centre in the United States and to a city that led that nation "in agriculture, motion pictures, and aircraft production." The chief catalyst of this growth was the city's Chamber of Commerce, which concentrated its efforts on luring investors and settlers from the American midwest to the city in order to take advantage of its warm and dry climate.⁶⁵ Anxious to withstand the economic challenge posed by its rapidly developing mainland neighbour and intrigued by the ongoing success of Los Angeles, Victoria's business community turned to tourism promotion at the turn of the century. In doing so, as we shall see, local initiatives, rather than the Montreal-based CPR, played the leading role in promoting the city as a tourist destination.

The Tourist Association of Victoria

Tourism has had neither a timeless nor an intrinsic association with British Columbia's provincial capital. While visitors included the city on their cruise itineraries along the Pacific Coast as early as the 1870s, the number of visitors remained low until the city undertook a sustained campaign to promote tourism at the turn of the century.⁶⁶ Victoria's first steps toward tourism promotion were, in fact, tentative. This is not surprising since the city retained its central role in the province's commercial development into the 1890s.⁶⁷ In the fall of 1890, however, with Vancouver's economy quickly developing, the city's Board of Trade turned its attention for the first time in a concentrated manner to the question of publicizing Victoria. In October of that year, the board created an Advertising Committee to explore the possibility of publicizing the city's investment opportunities as well as its "equable climate and fine scenery."⁶⁸ By April 1891, having impressed upon the provincial government the importance of publishing a pamphlet to benefit the province, the board undertook its first direct step in the direction of promotional activity by offering its services in gathering statistics for a book soon to be published under the auspices of the *Colonist* newspaper – very likely *Victoria Illustrated*.⁶⁹

In the late 1890s, the Board of Trade loaned the use of its name to

efforts aimed at advertising the city as a Klondike outfitting centre, and the board was becoming more involved in supplying and publishing information designed to attract travellers to the city.⁷⁰ By October 1899, the board had concluded that a concerted effort should be made to advertise the city and that “annual subscriptions” should be solicited in order to publicize “the trading advantages of Victoria and its attractions to tourists.”⁷¹ With this decision, the board immersed itself in the Pacific Northwest’s fledgling network of tourism promoters. One member was sent to a convention in Kamloops aimed at organizing a Provincial Good Roads Association. Three more were invited to embark upon a publicity excursion organized by the Seattle Chamber of Commerce.⁷²

In 1900 and 1901 the board helped to design a booklet to advertise the city entitled *Victoria, British Columbia: Past and Present*.⁷³ This publication offered a portrait of Victoria as a city that provided visitors with the chance to immerse themselves in local natural attractions and to observe firsthand the city’s industrial development possibilities. Under the heading “Panoramic and Picturesque,” for example, it called readers’ attention both to the attractive smaller islands nearby and to “ships being towed to the lumber mills ... [and] steamers speeding to all points of the coast and to the Orient and Australia.”⁷⁴ And, in late December 1901, as a sign that the board was now convinced more than ever of the importance of tourists to the city’s welfare, it began proceedings to approach the Canadian Pacific Railway with the idea of having the company construct a tourist hotel in Victoria.⁷⁵ While the push for a tourist hotel was a clear sign that tourism was gaining more attention from the board, it would not accomplish this task alone. The key player in the negotiations with the CPR was the city’s newly formed Tourist Association.

Organized tourism promotion in Victoria was the product of a cooperative effort among the city’s business and community leaders, but one figure played a leading role: the indefatigable Herbert Cuthbert. Cuthbert was born in Wakefield, England, in 1865 and had taken up a career in Victoria at the turn of the century as both a real estate agent and the part owner of an auction house.⁷⁶ The energetic Cuthbert arrived in Victoria in October 1891 and, quickly struck by the possibilities of the city’s new market building, became the market’s largest tenant by obtaining consignments of various types of produce and beef cattle. When this undertaking was halted by a smallpox epidemic, Cuthbert persevered to organize a new market and became a director of the local Agricultural Association. He also took a leading role in city improvements by spearheading a campaign to have the city build a stone embankment to replace the old wooden bridge across Government Street.⁷⁷ Cuthbert’s desire to develop the city’s market and improve local pedestrian walkways reflected the wider agenda of the contemporary urban reform movement.⁷⁸

Cuthbert outlined his support for tourism promotion in a July 1900 letter published in the *Victoria Daily Colonist*. Victoria's image as a "pleasure and health resort," he explained, must be spread throughout North America and Britain. But he was equally anxious to ensure that the flattering depictions of the city in guidebooks could be backed up by developments in the city itself. Civic improvements, including permanent roadways, pleasure grounds, and a revitalized inner harbour, Cuthbert argued, were necessary to maximize the city's allure as a tourist destination. To justify his recipe for success, Cuthbert drew a comparison between Victoria's potential as a seaside resort and previous success stories in Britain.⁷⁹ "I know of several cities in England that could not compare with Victoria, and that fifty years ago had not over 1,000 inhabitants which have now from 20,000 to 75,000 people," he explained, primarily because of their civic leaders' far-sighted decision to provide "attractions and entertainment for the visitors." The result, he argued, was prosperity. Both Blackpool and Southport, Cuthbert maintained, owed their "popularity and their largely increased population to the establishment of winter gardens and such places of entertainment." Visitors lured to Victoria by such entertainments might stay "for a day ... a week, a month or more, and many of them would become permanent residents." The resulting word-of-mouth publicity would also ensure that "Victoria's importance as a commercial and mining centre would be advertised more by these visitors coming amongst us than by anything else." As a local entrepreneur, Cuthbert also recognized the immediate benefits of such visits: "Our hotels would be filled," he noted, before drawing upon his experience as co-owner of a local auction house to predict that "the auctioneers would have a larger and more profitable business."⁸⁰

Less than a year later, Cuthbert again publicly admonished his fellow Victorians to take the possibilities of tourism promotion seriously, this time in an interview with a *Daily Colonist* reporter. On this occasion, he was armed with evidence detailing the development of a tourist destination closer to home: Seattle. In Seattle, Cuthbert explained, the value of business and residential properties was increasing dramatically. The impetus behind this development was the willingness of Seattle businesspeople to combine efforts and transcend individual self-interest. This willingness had allowed the city to prosper despite the fact that Seattle's cost of living was higher, and its quality of life was lower, than Victoria's. Victoria businesspeople could remedy this situation, Cuthbert claimed, only by following the lead of their southern counterparts. Victoria would attract a large number of residents only if its "citizens would lay themselves out to attract visitors and home seekers" by "providing amusements and entertainment for residents and visitors."⁸¹

As Cuthbert championed tourism's possibilities in print, the local

business community took tentative steps toward the creation of a tourist association. A preliminary meeting in November 1901 suggested a good deal of interest in such an organization on the part of Victoria's business leaders and prompted the *Daily Colonist* to suggest that "the organization in Victoria of an efficient Tourists' Association [is] a certainty." The tourist movement, the newspaper explained to its readers, was "one that ought to appeal to every business man, for the expenditure by tourists is large." Saint John, New Brunswick, it reported, had obtained \$2.5 million from tourist revenue in 1900. Confident that Victoria possessed both "the attractions that will bring tourists" and "the territory to draw from," the *Daily Colonist* restlessly awaited the day when information about the city reached potential tourists and a "golden harvest" resulted. Subscriptions totalling \$5,000, the newspaper suggested, would get a tourist association up and running.⁸²

With the necessary funding secured, the Tourist Association of Victoria (TAV) was formed in February 1902. In giving its final report, the association's Provisional Committee, headed by Mayor Charles Hayward, echoed the rhetoric of boosterism that Alan Artibise has identified with community leaders on the Prairies and proclaimed that its great success in canvassing funds for the new organization was evidence that the association had "secured the sympathy of all classes of the community."⁸³ Besides Mayor Hayward, the Provisional Committee was comprised of prominent business and civic leaders, including hotel proprietors Stephen Jones and G.A. Hartnagle, industrialists D.R. Ker and A.B. Fraser Sr., clothing store proprietor and Alderman W.G. Cameron, and journalists Frank I. Clarke and Charles H. Lugin.⁸⁴ While these men came from a variety of political and religious backgrounds,⁸⁵ and indeed pursued quite different occupations, they all shared two key characteristics. They were heavily involved in voluntary community activities, and their financial security depended upon the overall prosperity of the city itself. These men shared a sense of civic duty and were imbued with a dedication to philanthropy common among businesspeople of the time.⁸⁶

Aims and Activities of the TAV

While the *Daily Colonist* tempted local businesses with visions of a "golden harvest" of free-spending visitors, the leaders of the TAV remained focused on promoting tourism in order to attract settlement and investment.⁸⁷ Cuthbert had little time for observers who suggested that Victoria would not benefit from industrial development. In fact, he maintained that the tourist association should be dedicated to luring new factories to the city and that commercial interests must not be neglected in the city's efforts to become both a tourist resort and a leading centre of economic development in the Pacific Northwest. Cuthbert also emphasized the important

role that the association played in encouraging agricultural development. Concerted campaigns to lure prospective farmers to southern Vancouver Island, he explained, were necessary not only to build up these rural communities but also to stimulate industrial activity in Victoria itself.⁸⁸ Such aims were reminiscent of the goals associated with nineteenth-century international exhibitions, which offered countries such as Canada an opportunity to showcase natural resources with the hope of securing new “immigrants, capital, and markets.”⁸⁹

Cuthbert’s position was publicly endorsed by other prominent men. Charles H. Lugin stressed the connection between tourists and the region’s fisheries. Drawing upon his earlier experience as a lawyer and journalist in the Maritimes, Lugin pointed to the example of New Brunswick, where the provincial government had taken a leading role in encouraging visitors to make use of that province’s fishing opportunities.⁹⁰ As a less flattering example, Lugin pointed to the State of Maine: “the most barren, worthless portions” of that state “had been made valuable through advertising their attractions as hunting and fishing resorts.” Lugin urged the association to focus first on potential US customers west of the Mississippi before turning gradually to include the eastern coast of the United States and Canada. He also stressed the lucrative British market, in which “there were many people of wealth who counted distance as an obstacle easily overcome when there was something worth seeing and good sport at the other end.”⁹¹

A Mr. Mackenzie was among the eager supporters of the association and drew his inspiration from a recent report in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* – a report that he suggested “was in itself ... a sufficient reason for the formation of a tourist association in Victoria.” The report documented the large numbers of tourists visiting California who would be returning to the east by way of the northwest (many by way of Portland). What irked the *Seattle* newspaper was the city’s lack of promotional literature in California that might woo these travellers farther north.⁹² Mackenzie considered this a valuable lesson for Victoria. So did the *Daily Colonist*. Under the heading “Advertise Victoria,” the newspaper published an interview with M.P. Benton, general agent for the Burlington Railroad in Seattle, detailing the vast number of potential visitors to the city who had travelled from the east to vacation in California and were contemplating a northern route home. If Seattle “can attract any number of tourists from Southern California,” the *Daily Colonist* reasoned, “surely if Victoria’s thousand and one beauty spots were adequately advertised in the southern land, any who came as far north as Seattle would be morally sure to pay Victoria a visit.”⁹³ Such reasoning would lead, in the near future, to a great deal of cooperation between tourism promoters in Seattle, Victoria, and Vancouver.

With agreement upon the aims of the association, TAV members embarked upon a number of different activities, all of which were designed to develop the city's economy. Their efforts included a sustained local drive to beautify the city and modernize its infrastructure, a vigorous campaign to improve transportation routes to Victoria and expand the city's available accommodation, a concerted effort to advertise the city's attractions through promotional trips and the distribution of tourist literature, and, of course, a constant campaign to raise funds to support these various initiatives.

By July 1902, the *Daily Colonist* reported, great strides had been taken in improving the city's appearance. Many transportation companies, it noted, were "becoming alive" to the city's attractions "and have commenced to profit by the increase of travel." The involvement of the town's citizenry could be seen "in the permanent character of the public works" now under way. The city's main streets "are being paved with wooden blocks," it reported. The beautification campaign was substantial: "Concrete sidewalks are being laid. Some acres of the harbor are in the course of reclamation. The handsome stone embankment is almost completed and the low lands behind are being filled in."⁹⁴ The association concentrated its early efforts on upgrading the city's attractions. The Standing Committee on Hotels and Sea Bathing quickly embarked upon a plan to establish a sea-bathing resort by the summer of 1903. Transportation itself, it was hoped, would also become an attraction. The association introduced the Tally Ho Coach, a horse-drawn carriage that would enliven the city's streets while providing visitors with a guided tour of selected attractions six months of the year.⁹⁵ Three years later, in 1906, the TAV continued to devote a good deal of energy to improving the city's boulevards and bathing facilities.⁹⁶

The drawing power of civic improvements remained dependent upon Victoria's ability to overcome one of its chief limitations: its distance from major population centres. One way in which the Tourist Association sought to overcome its geographical isolation from the rest of North America was by appealing to the CPR. In August 1903, Cuthbert appealed to the CPR's passenger agent in Vancouver for assistance in fostering travel through the mountains from Alberta, and by December 1903 the association had succeeded in convincing the CPR to reduce its winter rates from Manitoba and the Northwest Territories to allow the Prairie population "the opportunity of taking a vacation in the enjoyment of our mild climate."⁹⁷ Cuthbert also supplied the CPR's Vancouver office with promotional literature bound for British nationals residing in Japan and China.⁹⁸ Accommodation, however, remained a chief concern – one that required a combined effort on the part of the newly formed Tourist Association and the Board of Trade.

32 *Boosterism and Early Tourism Promotion in British Columbia, 1890-1930*

The Board of Trade had approached the CPR in December 1901 about the possibility of a tourist hotel, but the company was at first lukewarm to the board's suggestion. Sir Thomas Shaughnessy initially refused the request because of his railway's many other commitments and because of the existence of a good-quality hotel, the Driard, in the city already. Continued pressure on the part of the board and the Tourist Association throughout 1902, however, softened the CPR's position.⁹⁹ By May 1903, Shaughnessy had agreed to recommend to his company that a tourist hotel be built on the city's inner harbour. The hotel would cost not less than \$300,000 and was dependent upon the citizens of the city transferring to the CPR the necessary land free of cost, furnishing free water, and exempting the company from taxation for fifteen years.¹⁰⁰

Establishment of the Empress Hotel, Cuthbert would later recall, provided the city with more than just additional accommodation. It also convinced the CPR to develop the E&N Railway and to make Victoria the home port for its Pacific fleet.¹⁰¹ The TAV's efforts to beautify the city, improve its transportation links with the surrounding area, and expand its accommodation were clearly designed to enhance the experience of tourists once they had decided to visit Victoria. But city beautification and improved transportation links would prove beneficial only if outsiders could be convinced to take advantage of these developments. The association's major undertaking, then, was a campaign to convince travellers to visit the city in the first place.

The TAV was determined to alert businesspeople in eastern North America to the economic opportunities in Victoria, and it frequently sent Herbert Cuthbert to deliver the message in person. A 1903 tour of large population centres in the east afforded Cuthbert the opportunity to inform easterners of the city's possibilities. In Toronto Cuthbert employed lectures to bring Victoria's temperate climate to the attention of the Canadian Club, the Canadian Manufacturers' Association (CMA), the Toronto Board of Trade, and the Business Men's League.¹⁰² The TAV's conception of tourism's function as a means to further Victoria's industrial development was underscored when CMA members arrived in town later that year. Cuthbert wrote to both Mayor Alexander G. McCandless and Premier Richard McBride explaining that, "of all [the] visitors we have had in the city during the last two years," the members of the CMA "are the most important." It was crucial, Cuthbert explained, that the CMA members be encouraged to see British Columbia "both as a market for Canadian goods and as an outlet for the investment of Canadian capital."¹⁰³

Cuthbert's duties also included frequent trips throughout the Pacific Northwest to distribute promotional literature. In June 1904, Cuthbert toured Washington and Idaho in an effort to promote fruit-growing opportunities near Victoria. On such trips, he distributed circulars and

copies of the association's promotional pamphlets. His intended audience was clear: potential investors and settlers. In North Yakima, for instance, he enthusiastically reported that the "people here are all very well-to-do, and we are getting a good deal of business from here."¹⁰⁴

His travels also allowed Cuthbert to investigate the success of other tourism centres. A 1904 trip to southern California provided him with the opportunity to lecture his fellow Victorians on developments in that state. He was particularly impressed by Pasadena and encouraged Victorians to replicate Pasadena's successes locally "by boulevarding" Victoria's streets, "throwing down its fences, and laying broad cement sidewalks, bordered with velvety emerald greensward." Such tours also allowed Cuthbert to emphasize the economic impact of tourist travel, and he did so on this occasion by reporting that Santa Barbara was bringing in five million dollars per year from tourists.¹⁰⁵ Primarily, however, such tours were designed to disseminate promotional material about Victoria.

Early tourist booklets focused directly on commercial development. For example, the TAV's 1905 publication *An Outpost of Empire* championed Victoria as "The Tourist and Commercial City of the Canadian Far West" and printed endorsements from a British editors' delegation paying homage to both the city's beauty and the province's agricultural and industrial opportunities.¹⁰⁶ The centrality of commercial concerns is apparent as well in promotional literature distributed on behalf of individual hotels. The Hotel Dallas's guide to Victoria began by boasting of the hotel's close proximity to the city's "commercial centre." Both the city's steady increase in population and the continual expansion of the city limits figure prominently in the hotel's description of Victoria. Here too the city's favourable climate was highlighted, as were a variety of burgeoning industries, including iron and boiler works, sawmills, chemical works, and shipbuilding. In fact, according to the Dallas, "every industry is well represented by many flourishing firms of old standing and respectability." Recreational pursuits, including hunting, fishing, boating, and cycling, were also highlighted. The booklet offered not simply a list of things to see and do but also a list of commercial opportunities to pursue and a variety of reasons to relocate one's family and business in Victoria.¹⁰⁷

Not surprisingly promotional literature also addressed readers' concerns about modernity. A 1902 Tourist Association of Victoria publication explained that Victoria boasted "every pastime to give the health-seeker and tourist more buoyant strength to equip him for this 'strenuous' modern life." The pamphlet enthused that the "wealth of picturesque islands" in the Gulf of Georgia "out-rivals the more widely known Thousand Isles," and it reported that "the combination of bold and picturesque country with old-fashioned English homes, their beautiful gardens and air of comfort and contentment makes Victoria a delightful residential city." The

city also boasted “a veritable feast of pastimes,” including boating, driving, mountain climbing, bathing, hunting, and fishing. The city’s climate, moreover, was “devoid of extremes of heat or cold,” and “sunstrokes and prostrations from the heat are afflictions only known to Victorians through newspaper reports from other parts of the world.” Thus, Victoria was the ideal destination for “those who desire to escape from the enervating heat of the middle and eastern states.” Victoria, readers were informed, “has not the hustling business methods of Chicago, nor the nerve-destroying habits of New York.” Instead, “conservative business methods, health, happiness and contentment are the features identified with Victoria.”¹⁰⁸

A 1903 TAV publication acknowledged Victoria’s place as “the leading Tourist and health resort of the Pacific North West” but also highlighted the city’s “varied commercial and industrial enterprises.” These included farming, lumber mills, copper and gold mining, salmon canneries, and ship-building.¹⁰⁹ The 1907 edition of the TAV’s *An Outpost of Empire* described Victoria as “a hive of industry” that “offers many excellent business and manufacturing opportunities.” These included agriculture, poultry and dairy farming, and fishing. Victoria’s position as a “manufacturing centre” ensured that it could draw upon Vancouver Island’s “immense iron and coal deposits.” Eschewing the more reserved approach of earlier tourist literature, this publication included a list of opportunities for entrepreneurs on its back page.¹¹⁰

Tourist literature was careful, of course, to avoid painting a portrait of Victoria as an underdeveloped community desperate for investment. A 1915 pamphlet, for example, attempted to strike the right balance by listing new industries that Victoria required, which included woollen mills and a steel industry, alongside a discussion of the city’s existing and prosperous industries.¹¹¹ To entice visitors to entertain the thought of settling in Victoria, promotional literature also highlighted the city’s social life, its low level of taxation, and its abundant supply of high-quality hospitals and schools.¹¹² These pamphlets also encouraged settlement by directing potential settlers to information resources. The 1905 edition of the TAV’s *Outpost of Empire* informed readers that the provincial government, “through its Horticultural department, will assist intending settlers with practical information upon all matters pertaining to fruit culture.”¹¹³

This promotional literature also emphasized that the city attracted the right sort of visitors and settlers. A 1903 TAV publication, for example, outlined a direct causal link between local agricultural successes and the ethnic makeup of the population. Farming near Duncan and Cowichan, it explained, was pursued on “some most excellent farms and ranches, in the hands of a very desirable class of English settlers.”¹¹⁴ Another booklet describing Victoria’s rapid economic expansion ascribed these results to both its climate and the makeup of its population. The fact that Victoria was

one of the wealthiest cities in Canada was “greatly owing to the fact that on account of the salubrity of its climate and other attractions it offers to people of wealth and refinement a delightful place of residence. It is a peculiarly British town and the citizens are proud of the fact.” The racial makeup of the city also offered optimism for the future. Vancouver Island’s “immense and practically inexhaustible natural resources” were now free to be capitalized upon by this population. Moreover, the sheer volume of resources remaining was due, in part, to the previous economic inactivity of the region’s Aboriginal population: “Where, but a few years ago, the native races held undisputed sway and waged their tribal wars,” the pamphlet explained, “the strong arm of the settlers has hewn a home and the long neglected land returns an hundred fold.”¹¹⁵

The 1907 pamphlet *Impressions of Victoria* also highlighted the city’s English characteristics. Trumpeting the city as “A Bit of England on the Shores of the Pacific,” it promised readers plants, shrubs, and flowers peculiar to England as well as popular sports from the “Old Land.” Along with championing the city’s healthy climate and housing opportunities, *Impressions of Victoria* attempted to make a tangible link between the city’s Englishness and England’s own industrial achievements. “The Island of Vancouver is larger than the kingdom of Ireland and almost as large as England,” it explained, adding that its “almost limitless undeveloped riches in iron, coal, copper, timber and fisheries” meant that it had “all the potential wealth that made England ‘the workshop of the world.’”¹¹⁶

Similar messages graced the TAV’s promotional posters. Posters distributed to the Southern Pacific Railway Company lauded Victoria as “A Bit of England on the Shores of the Pacific.”¹¹⁷ A coloured poster produced in March 1906 championed the city’s temperate climate and described Victoria as “The Finest Residential City in America.” The poster’s central images, the James Bay embankment, the post office block, the Empress Hotel, and the provincial legislature buildings, were surrounded by half-tone images of “sheep, orchard, farming and industrial scenes in and near to Victoria, the idea being to portray the commercial and shipping industries, together with the special opportunities the environs offer to settlers desirous of engaging in orcharding, mixed farming and dairying.”¹¹⁸

The same year a Victoria *Daily Times* editorial underscored and endorsed the motivation behind these promotional campaigns. In praising the TAV’s efforts, the editorial maintained that the key measure of the association’s success is “not to be found in the presence of transient wayfarers who have come to spend a portion of their holidays here, but in the sales of property made to well-to-do farmers and business men who, having acquired competencies, are in quest of the most congenial possible places of residence in which to take the rest they have earned by years of devotion to duty.”¹¹⁹ TAV activities were centrally focused on developing the city’s

industrial and agricultural infrastructure by encouraging outsiders to invest and settle in and around Victoria.

Civic beautification and promotional campaigns required money, and the campaigns to raise funds to support these endeavours revealed that TAV members considered these projects and promotional campaigns to be in the interests of all Victorians. During the TAV's first years of operation, its operating expenses ranged between \$8,000 and \$10,000 a year. Grants from the City of Victoria usually accounted for between 60 and 80 percent of the association's revenue.¹²⁰ To raise additional funds, the association solicited firms throughout the city, attempting to convince them of the importance of tourism promotion, and often stressed the ways in which these businesses benefited from the association's efforts. Cuthbert informed the Permanent Home Building Society of Victoria, for instance, that a crucial part of the association's work was "to increase the number of permanent residents here," work that must certainly "have a considerable influence on the business of your company."¹²¹ Even individual citizens, Cuthbert hoped, could be swayed to contribute to the association through self-interest. Writing to Joan Dunsmuir, widow of coal magnate Robert Dunsmuir, Cuthbert described the TAV's efforts as "devoted to the advertising of the city generally as a place of residence and as a resort for tourists." He emphasized the benefits that local businesses had derived from such efforts but made special mention of the tendency of the association's work "to increase the price of real estate throughout the city."¹²² Similarly, he told James Thompson of the Hudson's Bay Company in Victoria that the TAV's successful campaign to have the CPR build the Empress Hotel had ensured that "in some portions of the city real estate has increased in value over 100 per cent." The CPR's upcoming publicity campaigns would undoubtedly increase the city's population, Cuthbert explained, and further increase the value of the HBC's land holdings.¹²³

The association also solicited funds from the city itself. Writing to the mayor in 1903 to seek a substantial improvement to the city's grant of \$2,000, Cuthbert did his best to champion the association's cause. "Above everything else," Cuthbert reminded the mayor, "this tourist movement in the City was made possible by the contributions of the City Council and the business men." It had already "resulted in the awakening of the C.P.R. to the advantages of the City from a tourist standpoint." To add a competitive edge to his argument, Cuthbert informed the mayor that even after adding in the voluntary subscriptions from individuals and businesses the Tourist Association of Victoria found itself with "\$2,000 per year less" than its rivals in Vancouver. A contribution to tourism, Cuthbert reminded the mayor, also had a direct bearing on his government through increased taxes. "Two years ago Victoria, as a resort and residential city

was almost unknown in the ticket offices of the large Railway Co's or to those in search of such a resort," Cuthbert explained. "To-day it is the best advertised individual city on the continent. This is how your money is used, and the city is not expending in this way as much as in former years."¹²⁴

Keen to expand their city's population base and to ward off the mounting economic challenge posed by Vancouver, Victoria's community leaders turned to tourism promotion. In doing so, they not only focused on beautifying their city and improving its transportation links to the larger population centres in North America, but they also embarked upon publicity campaigns that featured promotional booklets and speaking tours. To underwrite these initiatives, they drew upon civic grants as well as individual subscriptions. Not surprisingly, and much to the chagrin of Victoria's civic boosters, similar tactics were soon employed by Victoria's chief rival, Vancouver.

The Vancouver Tourist Association

The Tourist Association of the city of Vancouver has more than twice the revenue enjoyed by our association. Flippant persons might retort that it needs it, as it has less than half the attractions of this city from a tourist's point of view.

— Editorial, *Victoria Daily Colonist*, 28 January 1903¹²⁵

Only months after the founding of the Tourist Association of Victoria, Vancouver's business community created one of its own. In late June 1902, local businesspeople circulated a petition calling upon the city's mayor, Thomas F. Neelands, to hold a meeting on the subject. According to the *Vancouver Daily Province*, "nearly all the prominent professional and business men of the city" signed the petition.¹²⁶ Attendance at the meeting itself, held on 26 June, was sparse, but among those present support for a tourist association was unanimous, and it was agreed that such an association was necessary "to advertise the city as a pleasure resort, and in every way possible to bring Vancouver to the attention of outsiders."¹²⁷

By early July 1902, the Vancouver Tourists' Association (VTA) was up and running. Fred Buscombe, a prominent china and glass merchant and a future mayor of Vancouver, served as its first president. As with the TAV in Victoria, the VTA's executive committee was comprised of local business leaders. The VTA's executive committee for 1909, for example, included significant representation from the real estate, insurance, and legal professions as well as two representatives from the CPR (see Table 1.1). Of the three leading VTA figures during the association's early years of

operations, two men, F.J. Proctor and J.R. Seymour, were in the real estate business and were likely to benefit directly from VTA activities luring settlers and investment into the city. The other leading figure was J.J. Banfield, a notary public and insurance agent.

To raise money for the new association, subscription lists were posted in business centres, banks, and larger stores throughout the city, and by 11 July over \$5,000 in subscriptions had been secured.¹²⁸ VTA members quickly formed committees focusing on reception, entertainment, and literature.¹²⁹ By mid-July, the association had established its headquarters in the Fairfield building on Granville Street, and within a week numerous visitors were dropping in to the headquarters in search of tourist information. The newly organized "Tally-Ho" trips around Stanley Park were also proving popular.¹³⁰

The VTA also played a leading role in the city's beautification movement. According to R.A.J. McDonald, the leaders of Vancouver's City Beautiful movement were motivated by a number of different concerns, including a desire to impose social order on the city's population, public-spirited philanthropy, and boosterism. The VTA took the lead in advancing the "commercial thrust for beautification."¹³¹ For example, at its first meeting, the association's secretary, H.W. Findlay, was instructed to draft communication to the City Council emphasizing "the immediate necessity of certain improvements at English Bay," namely benches, seats, and "proper sanitary arrangements."¹³²

Table 1.1

Vancouver Tourist Association executive committee, 1909

Member	Occupation
John J. Banfield	Notary public and insurance agent
Robert Cassidy	Barrister and solicitor
Charles B. Foster	Assistant general passenger agent, CPR
William Godfrey	Manager, Bank of British North America
W.H. Hargrave	Unknown
Richard Marpole	General executive assistant, CPR
John P. McConnell	Publisher, Ford-McConnell Ltd.
Frederick J. Proctor	Real estate and insurance
Charles David Rand	Real estate and stock broker
Joseph R. Seymour	Real estate and insurance
Rochford H. Sperling	General manager, BC Electric Railway and Vancouver Gas
George E. Trorey	Managing director, Henry Birks and Sons Jewellers
John Williams	Unknown

Sources: Henderson's City of Vancouver and North Vancouver Directory, 1909; Vancouver Daily Province 21 January 1909: 10.

As in Victoria, tourism promoters in Vancouver hoped to benefit from a close relationship with the CPR, and the association planned to approach the company quickly in the hope of securing “special transportation rates, and the arrangement of special summer excursions from points in the interior to Vancouver.”¹³³ But what most interested Vancouverites were material advantages that the CPR could bring their way. When the company offered the city land for the purpose of building a golf course, the *Daily Province* enthusiastically supported the proposed facility. Such an endeavour would “aid this city in coming to the front as a golf centre,” the newspaper explained, while relaying the position of CPR general superintendent, and VTA member, Richard Marpole, who “cited the fact that at all the winter resorts to the south of this city golf links are to be found, and they are looked upon as one of the strong points in drawing that class of people which this city is now so anxious to secure.”¹³⁴ Marpole, like early tourism promoters in Victoria, saw tourism promotion as a strategy that would attract rich visitors, not simply for their spending power but also for their investment potential.

Vancouverites did not expect the CPR to supply all of their city’s attractions. The VTA embarked upon its own campaign to make the city more attractive to potential visitors, and the local business community was not short on ideas to improve Vancouver’s fortunes. In championing the inauguration of train service to the fishing centre of Steveston, the *Daily Province* suggested that tourists would be among those drawn to this “quick and efficient medium of transportation.” Closely related to this endeavour was the possibility of a market site being constructed in the city, “whereat the produce of the Delta country may be disposed of by the farmers.”¹³⁵ Local fishers and farmers, Vancouverites had accepted, would benefit greatly from an increase in visitors. The association’s first secretary, H.W. Findlay, the advertising manager for the *Daily Province*, also wasted little time in bringing attractions to the city. Findlay wrote letters to interests across the province soliciting collections and items from mineral and agricultural industries so that they might be exhibited for visitors at the association’s headquarters. Findlay was sent, along with various fruits, vegetables, and grains, a sampling of “Indian and other curios” – an indication, perhaps, that Native culture could eventually be appropriated as a natural resource and tourist attraction.¹³⁶

Vancouver’s tourism promoters were aware, of course, of the activities of their Victoria counterparts. William Godfrey, manager of a local branch of the Bank of British North America, and a VTA member, had returned from a trip to the provincial capital in 1902 overwhelmed by the success of that city’s tourist association. “Every citizen seems to be directly interested,” he explained, “for it appeals to him as something that is bringing immediate results.” Godfrey was also impressed with the “detailed

management" of the TAV office and championed the city's advertising efforts.¹³⁷ That the two cities were in direct competition with one another was not lost on the *Daily Province*. The same year the newspaper printed a statement by a local resident explaining how, in at least one instance, Victoria had trumped Vancouver's efforts to attract wealthy visitors. "Two of the wealthiest men of Penang, China arrived in Vancouver by the last Empress," he explained. "They both had an unlimited amount of money and were willing to spend it." Both were "charmed" by Vancouver but "had heard so much of the attractions of Victoria," as advertised by the TAV, "that they were impatient to spend the rest of their stay ... in that city." The moral of the story, of course, was that Vancouver lacked Victoria's profile. "The only literature showing Vancouver's points of interest that the travelers could obtain," the *Daily Province* reported, "was what was supplied by the C.P.R. Co. on the steamers crossing the Pacific."¹³⁸

To overcome this publicity deficit, the VTA embarked upon a sustained promotional campaign. During 1907, for example, the association distributed 60,000 illustrated books, 70,000 folders and guides, 2,000 government bulletins, and hundreds of maps not only to the CPR and other railways but also to the Office of the High Commissioner in London as well as to leading hotels, libraries, and information bureaus throughout the world. In addition, a VTA representative travelled to Winnipeg and other population centres on the Prairies to deliver lectures accompanied by stereoscopic slides. The results of similar past endeavours, VTA president F.J. Proctor announced, were clearly paying dividends. In the past year, VTA headquarters had responded to approximately 2,000 letters of inquiry about the city, while roughly 5,000 visitors had dropped in on the headquarters itself – a visit that allowed them to view the VTA's display of fruits and minerals from throughout British Columbia.¹³⁹ Two years later the association spearheaded a vigorous publicity campaign to coincide with the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in Seattle (see Figure 1.1).¹⁴⁰

Overall, the VTA inherited the mantle of the city's leading public relations body from the Vancouver Board of Trade and took a more aggressive position in advertising the city to outsiders in order to promote its commercial and industrial development. The association's leading members were drawn primarily from the real estate sector, but, as Fred Buscombe's tenure as president suggests, merchants also held prominent positions. Like their counterparts in Victoria, tourism promoters in Vancouver endeavoured to convince potential investors to visit their city with the hope that such a visit would convince them to return as permanent contributors to sustained economic development. And like tourism promoters in Victoria, VTA members recognized the important role that the CPR and railway travel played in the tourist business.

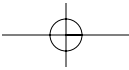


Figure 1.1 Vancouver Tourist Association poster, 1909. One of a thousand VTA posters printed to champion Vancouver as an attractive city for investors at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in Seattle in 1909.

Source: Philip T. Timms, photo, courtesy of City of Vancouver Archives, CVA 677-565.

Conclusion

Like visitors in search of Nova Scotia folklore, admirers of Tom Thomson paintings, and readers of the romantic stories of Mounted Police heroism, travellers to British Columbia between 1890 and 1930 welcomed the opportunity to escape from the pressures and concerns of modern life.¹⁴¹ As Marguerite S. Shaffer explains in her examination of early-twentieth-century tourists' motivations for visiting the American west, such "white, upper- and middle-class citizens" who were "threatened not only by increased immigration, labor unrest, and racial diversity, but also by a sense of powerlessness and 'weightlessness' manifested in modern urban-industrial living," embraced tourism in order to "regain some sense of security and self-control."¹⁴² But while such tourists journeyed to British Columbia to escape from the enervating effects of modernity, they were also determined to embrace the economic opportunities that modern life made possible. The province's vast forests, for example, were not simply awe-inspiring natural cathedrals; they were also raw materials awaiting industrial production. Similarly, British Columbia's coastline and interior regions offered tourists not only the sublime spectacle of mountain scenery

42 *Boosterism and Early Tourism Promotion in British Columbia, 1890-1930*

but also industrial opportunities ranging from canneries to copper mining. Tourists visiting British Columbia embraced the promise of modernity as much as they attempted to evade its unsettling side effects.

Anxious to develop the province, and aware of visitors' motivations, civic organizations in Victoria and Vancouver turned to tourism promotion in an attempt to attract potential investors. Early efforts at tourism promotion were thus very local in nature and relied to a great extent on the cooperation of large railway companies such as the CPR. The involvement of both local businesspeople and city governments was representative of the intensely competitive boosterism that has been associated with the establishment of communities on the Prairies. In the 1910s and 1920s, however, new tourism organizations would emerge to consolidate a more cooperative approach to tourism promotion. The most important of these organizations, the Pacific Northwest Tourist Association, would be led by Victoria tourism promoter Herbert Cuthbert.

