

“BC at its Most Sparkling, Colourful Best”: Post-war Province Building through
Centennial Celebrations

by

Mia Reimers

B.A., University of Northern British Columbia, 1996

M.A., University of Northern British Columbia, 1999

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

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University of Victoria

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ABSTRACT

The three centennial celebrations sponsored by the W.A.C. Bennett Social Credit government in 1958, 1966/67 and 1971 were part of a process of self-definition and province building. Post-war state development in British Columbia certainly included expanding and nationalizing transportation, building ambitious mega projects, and encouraging resource extraction in the hinterlands. The previously unstudied centennials were no less important to defining post-war British Columbia by creating the infrastructure on which cultural and hegemonic province building could take place. Using the methodologies and theories of Cultural Studies this study attends to both the discursive and material elements of these occasions. It uses the voluminous records of the three Centennial Committees, newspaper articles, government reports, and documents from community archives to reveal that that these elaborate and costly centenaries served the government's desire to build an industry-oriented consensus in BC's populace.

The government - and its Centennial Committees - sought to overcome regional disparities and invite mass participation by making the celebrations truly provincial in nature. Each community, no matter its size, had a local centennial committee, was funded for local commemorative projects, was encouraged to write its history, and enjoyed traveling centenary entertainments. All communities benefited from cultural amenities, the province's capital assets grew, the province started to undertake heritage

conservation and residents gained a new appreciation for their history. Invented traditions - limited and constructed historical re-creations and motifs – helped overcome regional differences. British Columbians were presented with images and narratives of explorers, gold-seekers, and pioneer-entrepreneurs who opened up the interior with ingenuity and bravery, as well as a mythic, popular “old west” narrative that all citizens, no matter region, could rally around. A trade fair and tourism promotion reinforced the tradition of industry especially for manufacturers and small business. By and large, British Columbians in 1958 – particularly white males who found an anti-modern release in centennial events – accepted and legitimized this industry-oriented consensus.

In the two later centennials new counter-hegemonies challenged this consensus. First Nations had opposed the colonial narrative in 1958, but by 1966/67 and 1971 they were more vocal and politically active. Other British Columbians opposed the development agenda of the centenaries; youth, environmentalists and labour argued that the celebrations were a waste of time, money, and energy when more pressing issues of environmental degradation and unemployment were present. The government’s static Centennial Committee was ill equipped to address these challenges. It offered superficial amends, such as creating Indian Participation and Youth Subcommittees, but ultimately could not repudiate the hegemony on which it, and Social Credit, was based.

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Introduction:

Much current political discourse in British Columbia eventually refers back to the legacy of Premier William Andrew Cecil Bennett and his unmatched twenty-year reign as Social Credit premier between 1952 and 1972. Changes to government policy in such areas as hydro-electricity, highways or ferries usually summon some reference to Bennett and the great changes the province underwent under his helm. I was born in Prince George a year after Bennett's defeat. In reflecting on my own past I now understand that much of my everyday life took place in the context of a different legacy of the Bennett government: one oft mentioned but rarely analyzed within political or historical discourse.

One of my earliest and happiest memories from elementary school was escaping the classroom on a field trip to Fort George Park on the banks of the Fraser River. There, we played on the merry-go-rounds and gathered at the picnic tables to gorge on watermelon provided by our parents. I returned many times to the park during my childhood and youth. On at least one occasion our family celebrated Prince George's annual Simon Fraser Days there, and cheered on the canoe race's fur trade-garbed paddlers. Other childhood memories involve swimming lessons and outings at the city pool. A water fountain, enclosed by tall white stucco walls, stood just outside its doors where we took our packed lunches or arranged to meet. I marveled at the fountain's stature and at its mosaic scenes of lumbermen, sternwheelers and canoes.

As an adult, I financed my undergraduate education by working at the Fraser Fort George Regional Museum and Archives in Prince George. Many visitors remarked that in contrast to our modern building, they preferred the museum's original wooden one. It

was a poor replica of a fort complete with stockade enclosure. As a graduate student, I spend innumerable hours visiting other archives in Prince Rupert, Vancouver and the Provincial Archives in Victoria.

What connects these memories of the park, the museum and archives buildings, the fountain and Simon Fraser Days is that all were legacies of British Columbia's three centenary celebrations, organized and supported by the W.A.C. Bennett government. Three celebrations resulted in institutions that contributed to my personal and educational development. And I am not alone; the province is still awash with the detritus of celebrations past: from "Centennial" museums in Kitimat and Langley to "Centennial" golf courses and parks in Prince Rupert and New Denver. Local and provincial histories, scholarships, community celebrations and much more emanated from these centenaries, but British Columbians are largely unaware of the origins of the cultural and recreational activities and facilities that surround and enrich their communities and their everyday lives.

This dissertation is not all about bricks and mortar, however, and neither were BC's centennial celebrations, despite resulting in much of it. Rather this dissertation assesses the political motives and meanings underlying the celebrations of the centenary of mainland British Columbia's "birth" in 1958, the centenary of the union of the two colonies combined with the Canadian Centennial in 1966/67, and the centenary of British Columbia joining Confederation in 1971. This dissertation argues that these celebrations were part and parcel of the Social Credit project of province building.¹ W.A.C. Bennett's

¹ For case studies on economic and developmental province-building see John R. Wedley, "Infrastructure and Resources: Governments and their Promotion of Northern Development in BC 1945-1975" (PhD Dissertation, University of Western Ontario, 1986)

Social Credit government inherited a geographically fractured province where regions were largely isolated from one another despite postwar growth and prosperity. The government seized celebration as a means to both publicize and unify the province. By offering grants to encourage every community to participate in the celebrations, and by staging identical entertainments and historical re-creations throughout the province, the government tried to cultivate a *provincial* identity in BC's residents that would carry forward economic expansion. It believed mass participation was the key to this objective, and worked to have regions and ethnic and special interest groups participate. To acculturate British Columbians to accelerated postwar resource extraction, the province also constructed a daring pioneering past that focused primarily upon the exploits of "tough men" – explorers, miners and pioneer-entrepreneurs – with whom modern British Columbians were encouraged to identify in the current drive to open up the province with infrastructure and resource extraction. British Columbians largely accepted and reveled in 1958's centennial and its version of the past. By the two later centennials, however, the province had undergone significant demographic changes and a transformation in social norms, due in large part to First Nations activism, changing demographics and the rise of the new left. First Nations, youth, labour and environmentalists widely criticized the ideas and representations on which the centennials (and this Social Credit government) were built.

Provincial scholarship has not yet made BC's centenaries a focus of historical inquiry although passing references to them abound in historical and political literature.

and Stephen G. Tomblin, "W.A.C. Bennett and Province-Building in British Columbia," *BC Studies* 85 (Spring 1990): 45-61. For an explanation of how this dissertation uses this terminology see Chapter One.

Rather, the centenaries are most often used as a backdrop to other stories or as anecdotes. Perhaps this should not be surprising since the government sought to make links and connections to varied individuals, organizations, interests and communities to carry out mass celebrations. Furthermore, as “year-long” celebrations, they monopolized media coverage in four of the twenty years of Bennett’s administration and triggered some of his political and cultural decisions. For instance, although David Mitchell’s classic biography *W.A.C. Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia* details Bennett’s political philosophy and achievements in office, it mentions the first centenary only as a visitor draw and as a rationale for nationalizing the ferry system linking Vancouver Island and the mainland. The last centenary only commands attention by way of explaining the Premier’s propensity for travel in his last years in office, particularly his appearance in California to sell British Columbia’s celebrations.² Likewise, Walter D. Young’s chapter on political parties in *The Reins of Power* refers to the centenaries when defining W.A.C. Bennett’s brand of populism as characterized by “a lack of sophistication that expressed itself in bond-burning ceremonies, touring cabinet meetings, the order of the dogwood, and a plethora of centennial celebrations.”³

Other works use specific incidents and elements of the centenaries as an entry into other topics of inquiry. In “A ‘Fantastic Rigmarole’: Deregulating Aboriginal Drinking in British Columbia, 1945-1962,” Robert A. Campbell puts Prince Rupert’s 1958 “Centennial Riot,” a melee of 1000 residents that resulted in the reading of the Riot Act and the arrest of 39 (mostly aboriginal) people, in the context of the wider campaign to

² David J. Mitchell, *W.A.C. Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1983), 269 and 399.

³ Walter D. Young, “Political Parties” in *The Reins of Power: Governing in British Columbia*, ed J. Terence Morley et al. (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1983), 109.

remove discriminatory regulations that limited the opportunities of First Nations people to buy and consume alcohol. Most people in Prince Rupert blamed this discriminatory legislation for the riot, therefore the city passed a resolution supporting liquor equality for First Nations peoples that helped lead to the province's 1962 decision not to enforce the liquor provisions in the Indian Act.⁴ Similarly, Arn Keeling and Robert McDonald use the "lavishly illustrated, 176-page celebration of British Columbia chronicl[ing] the conquest and submission of the remote province and its recent rise to industrial glory," the 1958 *British Columbia Centennial Record*, as an illustration of the "post-war consensus" that favoured intensive development during the W.A.C. Bennett years, a policy which Roderick Haig-Brown critiqued.⁵

BC's centennial organizers encouraged the writing of the province's local histories and commissioned Margaret Ormsby, a historian at the University of British Columbia and native of the province, to write *British Columbia: A History* specifically to celebrate the first centenary. Despite their role in spurring post-war historical writing on the province, subsequent provincial histories overlook the centennials. Jean Barman's *The West Beyond the West* overlooks them entirely, although their examination would have perfectly complemented themes developed in her chapter "The Good Life, 1945-1975."⁶ More recently, Patricia Roy and John Herd Thompson published *British Columbia: Land of Promises*, an illustrated history. The text's only reference to the

⁴ Robert A. Campbell, "A 'Fantastic Rigmarole': Deregulating Aboriginal Drinking in British Columbia, 1945-1962," *BC Studies* 141 (Spring 2004): 81-104.

⁵ Arn Keeling and Robert McDonald, "The Profligate Province: Roderick Haig-Brown and the Modernization of British Columbia," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 36 (2001), 8.

⁶ Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996). Unfortunately, the newest edition of *The West Beyond the West* was published after the revision stage of this dissertation.

centenaries is a 1958 photograph of Kwakwaka'wakw chief Mungo Martin presenting the Queen Mother with a traditional ceremonial copper on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the creation of British Columbia as a colony. The inclusion of the photograph highlights rapidly emerging pluralistic values: the potlatch was banned until 1951; seven short years later Native culture was being celebrated.⁷ Such oversight is understandable in works that cannot aspire to be comprehensive.

Less understandable is the lack of recognition the centenaries receive in a more focused work on British Columbia's tourist promotion. In *Selling British Columbia: Tourism and Consumer Culture, 1890-1970* Michael Dawson argues that during the twentieth century tourism promotion passed from being a local initiative tied directly to boosterism to an "industry" entitled to government expenditures and a government travel bureau. Following the Second World War, BC faced stiff competition from markets in Mexico and a reconstructed Europe. Therefore, the government became much more proactive in managing the boom by shifting the BC Government Travel Bureau (hereafter BCGTB) from the Department of Industry to the Department of Recreation and Conservation in 1957, then, notably in centennial year, elevating it to its own department, the Department of Travel Industry in 1967. Along with this, the 1950s saw an increase in tourist advertising of British Columbia as a *province* connected by highways to facilitate road travel rather than as a series of discrete regions. This provincial focus was mirrored in the centennial celebrations, and the relationship between the government tourism strategies and the centenaries is clear. However, Dawson mentions centenaries only in two brief passages. In discussing the cultivation of BC-specific tourism themes, he

⁷ Patricia E. Roy & John Herd Thompson, *British Columbia: Land of Promises* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2005), 157.

paraphrases a speech in which the head of the Canadian Government Travel Bureau cited BC's 1958 centennial as a model of how Canada's tourist industry should remain something distinctive. In his conclusion, Dawson examines the prominence of Native culture in the promotion of the province. He quotes Harold Merilees, the manager of the Greater Vancouver Visitors and Convention Bureau and member of Vancouver's 1958 Centennial Committee, who wished to make BC's association with native iconography permanent. After visitors to BC's 1966 centennial celebrations watched a 100-foot tall totem pole being carved, Merilees proposed donating it to Ottawa to be erected on Parliament Hill.⁸ Despite these tantalizing tidbits, Dawson does not further mention the centenaries. This is startling particularly given the preoccupation of the 1958 BC Government Travel Bureau Report with the centennial celebrations. Working with the Intergovernmental Subcommittee, the BCGTB distributed over a million and a half pieces of promotional literature bearing a centennial theme or motif.⁹ At the same time the BCGTB encouraged British Columbians to stay at home for their holidays since the centennial would offer numerous recreational activities.¹⁰ Further, the centennials established many tourist attractions such as the reconstructed communities of Barkerville and Fort Steele, and stop-of-interest signs along highways.

Some recent graduate theses have given the centenaries greater attention. Chad Reimer's 1995 dissertation "The Making of British Columbia History: Historical Writing and Institutions, 1784-1958" examines the efforts of historians and historical societies to

⁸ Michael Dawson, *Selling British Columbia: Tourism and Consumer Culture, 1890-1970* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 2004), 160 and 212.

⁹ Province of British Columbia, *Report of the Department of Recreation and Conservation* (1958), 47.

¹⁰ See Chapter Two.

provide British Columbia, “one of the newest portions of the New World,” with a sense of place and identity through its written history.¹¹ Reimer posits three stages over his time period. First, historians focused on writing British Columbia into a larger imperial history. Then, groups such as the Native Sons and Daughters of British Columbia looked for identity in a robust pioneer history. Finally, professional and academic history legitimized these earlier themes, particularly with the publication of Margaret Ormsby’s *British Columbia: A History* in 1958. Reimer credits Ormsby for writing a singular provincial past by using a narrative methodology and inflating key pioneer figures as representative “of the society they led.”¹² The vision of British Columbia as a singular entity connected by a rugged pioneering past was also present throughout *public* history during the centennial year.

Three master’s theses also explore British Columbia’s centenaries according to their interest in related topics. “‘Land of the Painted Totem’: Northwest Coast Native Art at the Service of the 1958 British Columbia Centennial” is a compelling analysis of cultural appropriation of Native art and symbolism throughout the 1958 centennial. In it, Brenda Weatherston argues that because centennial organizers made no linkages between contemporary First Nations and the cultural remains of their ancestors they did not question the appropriation of totem poles as a symbol of BC, nor did they object to non-Native artists using them in ways that were inappropriate and inconsistent with First

¹¹ Chad Reimer, “The Making of British Columbia History: Historical Writing and Institutions, 1784-1958” (Ph.D. diss., York University, 1995), 2.

¹² *Ibid.*, 388.

Nations customs.¹³ In “Performing Musqueam Culture and History at British Columbia’s 1966 Centennial Celebrations,” an article based on her master’s thesis, Susan Roy uses the centennial as one lens to view the highly politicized messages implicit in Musqueam cultural performances. On certain occasions, the Musqueam, whose dances are part of “personal identity, private knowledge, and spirituality within the Aboriginal community,”¹⁴ perform specific warrior dances, seldom seen within their own community gatherings, for non-aboriginal audiences as part of their diplomatic relations with dominant society. While the warrior dance conformed to white expectations, the dancers used it to “convey politicized messages about cultural and economic vitality.” Thus, they agreed to dance at the dedication ceremony for the “Route of the Totems” totem at the Tsawwassen ferry terminal and to participate in the ceremony in ways sanctioned by the organizers, but they also used the ensuing publicity to criticize the historical inaccuracy of the short, Haida-style pole erected in their territory.¹⁵ As Roy notes, “centennial events were a potential (though limited) site of public debate about history.”¹⁶ Finally, in “Historical Origins and Collective Memory in British Columbia’s Community-based Museums,” Kathleen Trayner examines the community museum as being developed “within distinct settings of localized politics and economics.”¹⁷ She credits the 1958

¹³ Brenda Lee Weatherston, “Land of the Painted Totem’: Northwest Coast Native Art at the Service of the 1958 British Columbia Centennial” (M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria, 1998).

¹⁴ Susan Roy, “Performing Musqueam Culture and History at British Columbia’s 1966 Centennial Celebrations,” *BC Studies* 135 (Autumn 2002), 59.

¹⁵ The Route of the Totems project is further explored in Chapter Five.

¹⁶ Roy, “Performing Musqueam Culture,” 59.

¹⁷ Kathleen Trayner, “Historical Origins and Collective Memory in British Columbia’s Community-based Museums” (M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria, 2003).

provincial centennial and its per capita grant scheme¹⁸ as providing a solution to local and federal struggles over the future of Fort Langley and what constituted its collective memory. In 1954 when the federal government established Fort Langley as a national historic site based on Canada's fur trade meta-narrative, it asked the Native Sons of British Columbia to vacate the site along with their collection of local pioneer memorabilia. The local community was in turmoil until the provincial centennial gave Langley the opportunity to build a modern museum as its commemorative project in which to house and display the displaced collection. In this way the centennial celebration allowed for the continuance of collective memory in the community, and succeeding celebrations bolstered the preservation and appreciation of heritage.

Although the inclusion of the centennials varies from passing reference to more in-depth analysis, collectively these works demonstrate that the celebrations affected a range of events in British Columbia's recent history. It is clear BC's centenaries infused provincial society during the third quarter of the twentieth century and they provide a lens through which to view the province in these years. This is important since the history of twentieth-century British Columbia, particularly the post-war years, is sorely understudied.¹⁹ Further, cultural and intellectual history is less developed in British Columbia in comparison to Canada as a whole, prompting Reimer to note that his dissertation "make[s] a rare contribution to the intellectual history of BC."²⁰

¹⁸ See Chapters One and Three.

¹⁹ Robin Fisher, "Matter for Reflection: BC Studies and British Columbia History," *BC Studies* 100 (Winter 1993-94), 63. Fisher notes "British Columbia historians should be thinking about getting into the twentieth century before it is over." In the early 21st century this is still the case.

²⁰ Reimer, "The Making of British Columbia History," 5-6. He notes an exception in Douglas Cole, "The Intellectual and Imaginative Development of British Columbia,"

This dissertation endeavors to contribute to British Columbian and Canadian cultural history. Scholars have traditionally approached growth and province building, under Bennett's Social Credit government materially; examining the nationalization of industry and transportation,²¹ or its promises to small business.²² Because this administration presided over such rapid growth in infrastructure and material wealth, other aspects of its workings were largely overshadowed. Therefore, scholarly work often overlooks, or mentions only in passing, the ritualistic and cultural elements of this government. While this dissertation complements previous work on post-war British Columbia, its methodology and theoretical underpinnings are qualitatively different. In addition to illuminating BC's post-war material development, it draws on a body of cultural theory, including post-structuralism, cultural anthropology and political theory, common in international and Canadian cultural history on state commemoration and celebration. It establishes the W.A.C. Bennett government as a cultural-selector and a myth-creator, and in so doing, bridges the chasm between a materialist and discursive view of state-directed, post-war development.

Journal of Canadian Studies 24 (Fall 1989): 70-9. Since Reimer published his dissertation, there have been few developments in BC intellectual and cultural history besides the master's theses noted above and James E. Murton, "Public Celebrations and Public Meanings: The Queen's Birthday in Victoria, 1859-1920" (M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria, 1995).

²¹ See for example, Stephen G. Tomblin, "In Defense of Territory: Province-Building under W.A.C. Bennett" (Ph.D. diss., University of British Columbia, 1985), Mitchell, *W.A.C. Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia*, John R. Wedley, "A Development Tool: W.A.C. Bennett and the PGE Railway" *BC Studies* 117 (Spring 1998): 29-50, and Frank Edward Leonard, "W.A.C. Bennett and his Choice of State Enterprise: The 1958 Case of British Columbia Ferries" (M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria, 2002.)

²² See for instance Gordon Hak, "Populism and the 1952 Social Credit Breakthrough in British Columbia," *Canadian Historical Review* 85: 2 (2004): 277-296.

The theoretical base of this dissertation starts with what scholars have loosely termed the “linguistic turn,” – a distrust of written language’s ability to represent reality, and a related suspicion of essentialism, meta-narratives and so-called truths.²³ In her study unpacking trader narratives in the nineteenth century Columbian Plateau, Elizabeth Vibert notes that historians increasingly approach source material critically, with the understanding that “meanings in texts are not transparent” and that facts “are products of the social and cultural forces in place when the texts were created.” As writers of texts, historians must be ever alert to their own creation of meaning through language.²⁴ Poststructuralism, or more generally postmodernism, has infused academia to the point that the current generation often uses such methodology quite subconsciously, approaching text as possessing cultural baggage, paying attention to omissions and absences, and questioning assumptions, descriptors, and terminology ascribed to subjects. In this dissertation, I interrogate centennial literature in such a manner; language in such texts becomes source material itself, beyond the events they describe, when attention is paid to how the written word *creates* meaning.

Due to the influence of poststructuralism, cultural historians have become attuned to reading through or deconstructing other cultural forms of meaning, both textual and

²³ Academia, particularly the social sciences and humanities, was jarred by developments in literary theory and philosophy in the 1960s and 1970s. French philosopher Jacques Derrida argues that language constituted its own system separate from reality. When academics approach written texts, therefore, the meanings they distill only refer to other texts, language and words, rather than being representative of reality. Historian and philosopher Michel Foucault further challenges not only written language, but discourses of power, institutions, practices and social categories. Norman J. Wilson, *History in Crisis? Recent Directions in Historiography* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1999), 113-116 and Paula S. Fass, “Cultural History/Social History: Some Reflections on a Continuing Dialogue,” *Journal of Social History* 37 (2003), 41.

²⁴ Elizabeth Vibert, *Traders’ Tales: Narratives of Cultural Encounters in the Columbia Plateau, 1807-1846* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 5.

visual. When once the slogans, cartoons and pamphlets utilized in this dissertation would have been considered trivial, cultural historians now covet such cultural ephemera as an inroad to understanding *specific* social and political contexts. Lynn Hunt explains, “the accent in cultural history is on close examination – of texts, of pictures, and of actions – and on an open-mindedness to what those examinations will reveal rather than on elaborations of new master narratives or social theories to replace the materialist reductionism of Marxism and the Annales School.”²⁵ The study of culture, and cultural forms, allows historians to overcome reductionist socio-economic analysis by emphasizing constructions of culture as central to historical change. Culture, as Catherine and Stuart Hall define it, is more about a process of the production and exchange of meaning and how that meaning regulates society and institutions, rather than about a narrow perspective of culture as being a set of static things. As language is central to the construction of meaning, therefore it is crucial to culture.²⁶

For those who study commemoration, anthropological and political theory complements post-structuralism and the deconstruction of text. Cultural anthropology, including insights from John MacAloon, Clifford Geertz and Victor Turner, also underlines the importance of culture, ritual and commemoration in creating meaning in society. Cultural performances serve a broader purpose than entertainment or catharsis;

²⁵ Lynn Hunt, “Introduction: History, Culture and Text,” in *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 17.

²⁶ Catherine Hall, “Introduction: Thinking the Postcolonial, Thinking the Empire,” in *Cultures of Empire: Colonizers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Catherine Hall (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 11.

they are specific occasions that are fundamental to social definition and experience.²⁷

Through their ethnographical work, these anthropologists provide tools for understanding individual behaviour in ritual. Similar to the postmodernist wariness of text, Clifford Geertz critiqued anthropological methodology of observation, description, and classification of human behaviour as being “thin description” since it only catalogues the anthropologists’ “own constructions of other people’s constructions.” He warned that the meaning of a particular behaviour is obscured unless the ethnographer is able to sort out the underlying social and individual meaning of the action. This is where “thick description” comes in; the ethnographer must recognize the action is part of a “multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular and inexplicit, and which he must contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render.”²⁸ The study of individual behaviour in any cultural event, then, cannot take place in a vacuum. Historians must explicate ritualistic behaviour from the web of social meanings and social constructions in which they are bound.²⁹ Turner further provides insights as to individual reception to ritual and celebration with his concepts of “liminality” and “communitas” derived from

²⁷ John J. MacAloon, “Introduction: Cultural Performances, Cultural Theory,” in *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals toward a Theory of Cultural Performance*, ed. John J. MacAloon (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1984), 1-2.

²⁸ Clifford, Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 10.

²⁹ In her work on crowd behaviour, Natalie Zemon Davis found anthropological theory, including that of Geertz and Turner, useful in providing context to the rituals she studied and a greater understanding of the human experience. Zemon Davis credited anthropology for permitting the examination of “informal or small scale interactions which can express important linkages and conflicts” within a social structure. Natalie Zemon Davis, “Anthropology and History in the 1980s: The Possibilities of the Past,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 11 (1981): 267-75 quoted in Suzanne Desan, “Crowds, Community and Ritual in the Work of E.P. Thompson and Natalie Davis,” in *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 52.

the work of Arnold van Gennep. Turner maintains that liminality is a state reached during a ritual process or ceremony where individual subjects reach a transitional state “betwixt and between” the past status quo and a new social ethos. Liminality, “a moment in and out of time” shared by participants, allows *communitas* or community to emerge.³⁰ As this dissertation will reveal, in the 1958 centennial celebration, simultaneous ritual provided such a transitory stage from a collection of regional identities to a provincial one.

This dissertation also draws on Antonio Gramsci and Eric Hobsbawm’s theories of hegemony, which posit state culture, including commemoration, as inherently political. Although Gramsci never conclusively defines hegemony, the concept is popular among historical anthropologists and historians because of its ability to find a middle ground between materialism and discourse, and Marxism and postmodernism. Hegemony is not an ideology, nor the imposition of a ruling class’s power. A Marxist would not find hegemony in the capitalist class’s values, but rather in the system of commodity production, a system “that appears to be governed by natural laws above and beyond human intervention.”³¹ To be sure, hegemony is a process that is constructed and maintained by dominant elements in society. Through repetition in cultural production,

³⁰ Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974) reprinted in *High Points in Anthropology*, eds. Paul Bohannan and Mark Glazer (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), 504. Three works in Canadian cultural history particularly draw on Turner. See Keith Walden, “Respectable Hooligans: Male Toronto College Students Celebrate Hallowe’en, 1884-1910,” *Canadian Historical Review* 68 (1997): 1-34; Robert Rutherford, “Canada’s August Festival: *Communitas*, Liminality, and Social Memory,” *Canadian Historical Review* (June 1996): 221-249 and E.A. Heaman, “Taking the World by Show: Canadian Women as Exhibitors to 1900,” *Canadian Historical Review* 78 (1997): 599-631.

³¹ Jean and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 19.

ritual processes and institutions, hegemonic control is largely rendered invisible because it becomes shared, accepted and taken-for-granted.³²

Ian McKay's study of the construction of the "Folk" – a hardy, anachronistic, rural people – in Nova Scotia as an anti-modern reaction is one such study that uses a neo-Gramscian theory to reconcile Marxist and postmodernist approaches to historical causality. McKay argues that the creation of the folk led to their commodification. Had he implemented a purely Marxist approach to his study, exposing the oppressors and the economic deprivation of the class constructed as the folk, he would have missed "a sense of a socio-cultural relational field, a vast network of things and words, within which subject-positions are created." On the other hand, he cannot abide the tendency for postmodernism to collapse everything into discourse, denying any material base in a quest to shatter essentialist notions.³³ In neo-Gramscian hegemony, particularly as articulated by Stuart Hall, dominant discourses, by the very nature of their dominance and invisibility, allow the ruling class the "'monopoly of the means of mental production' – or of the 'cultural apparatuses' to use a more modern phrase."³⁴ This theoretical position, McKay feels, "secures the materialism of ideology without taking us back either to culturalism or economism; and it acknowledges the importance of language without requiring everything be turned into 'discourse.'"³⁵ Such a middle ground provides a

³² Ibid., 21-25.

³³ Ian McKay, *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 300-303.

³⁴ Stuart Hall, "The Toad in the Garden: Thatcherism among the Theorists," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, eds. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 45 quoted in McKay, *The Quest of the Folk*, 303.

³⁵ McKay, *The Quest of the Folk*, 303.

sensible theoretical model, and has informed this study. In the case of British Columbia's centennial celebrations, government literature, centennial images and ceremonial observances were the tools by which government created meaning and hegemonic control, so it is vital to pay attention to the language of these cultural producers. However, this process ran parallel with concrete socio-economic changes, which cannot be discounted or deconstructed.

Following other scholars, this dissertation sees hegemony as neither unchanging nor absolute, since remnants of what it supplanted linger. The process of hegemony requires constant repetition and maintenance since it is intrinsically vulnerable, therefore it can be unmade.³⁶ Gramsci focuses "attention on those components of the dominant culture that require the consent of the subordinates"; thereby he suggests "a culture in constant process, where the state of play between the classes can be changed very rapidly."³⁷ Hegemony requires society's accommodation, but subordinate groups and counter-hegemonies constantly challenge it. As Norman Knowles explains in his study of the Loyalist myth, "hegemony is more effectively understood as an uneven process that involves both accommodation and resistance."³⁸ This study reveals that BC's centennial celebrations were also sites of negotiation and challenge. The hegemony maintained by the government and its centennial committee required constant adjustments to challenges by counter-hegemonic forces.

Eric Hobsbawm furthers the study of state commemoration by applying the concept of hegemony to nation building and the construction of the past. He maintains

³⁶ Jean and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 25.

³⁷ McKay, *The Quest of the Folk*, 302.

³⁸ Norman Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists: The Ontario Loyalist Tradition and the Creation of Usable Pasts* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1997), 9.

that seemingly permanent and old traditions are in fact deliberately orchestrated “inventions” by the state and dominant society which use celebration, commemoration, and historical pageantry to inculcate certain values in a society, to maintain hegemony and to forge national identity. New “invented traditions” can be “readily grafted on old ones, [and] sometimes they could be devised by borrowing from the well-supplied warehouses of official ritual, symbolism and moral exhortation.”³⁹ Repetition of such traditions implies continuity with the past, thereby legitimizing the present administration. Hobsbawm argues the invention of tradition is particularly relevant to the nation “with its associated phenomena: nationalism, the nation-state, national symbols, histories and the rest.”⁴⁰ Hobsbawm’s work also informs this dissertation. The W.A.C. Bennett government cleverly used the BC centenaries, to “invent” a pioneering, entrepreneurial, provincial identity in order to complement contemporary resource exploitation.

Further, this study builds on the work of Canadian cultural historians, who attend to hegemony and invented traditions within commemoration. National myths, hegemonic discourses or “consensual hallucinations,” as Daniel Francis terms it, are required in our sparsely populated nation because “we lack a common religion, language or ethnicity.”⁴¹ In Ontario, many different factions reinvented the Loyalist past, making it “useable” to obtain present goals. For instance, in the 1850s the state funded Loyalist history to foster a cohesive historical consciousness, inculcate values attributed to the Loyalists, and to

³⁹ Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions” in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1983), 6.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁴¹ Daniel Francis, *National Dreams: Myth, Memory, and Canadian History* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1997), 10.

sanction future aspirations. Later, the Loyalist descendants took on this mantle and promoted the past as they saw it, which culminated in the 1884 centennial celebrations.⁴² The organizers of Quebec's 1908 tercentenary celebrations carefully selected aspects of Canadian history to serve explicit political goals, namely to diffuse tensions between English and French Canadians and to bring French Canadians into the fold of imperialism. Governor General Earl Grey thought the reconstruction of historic areas of Quebec as symbols of the nation could transcend differences between the two ethnicities. The Plains of Abraham was a suitable site in that it had fallen into disrepair; however, it presented a dilemma. How could its reconstruction unite Canadians in celebrating the founding of New France without also commemorating the site of its fall? The answer, Grey believed, lay in the historical pageant – with its chronological, episodic narrative. By combining the British victory in 1759 with the French victory, albeit short-lived, at the Battle of St. Foy in 1760, he hoped to present the two nationalities as equal, furthering the myth of two founding peoples, and rendering the conquest, in symbolic terms, as a draw.⁴³

These studies, like the present one, demonstrate that hegemony is not monolithic, nor widely internalized. While Hobsbawm provided insight into the ways the state uses the past, he “leaves little room for the role of public discourse and exchange in shaping the past.”⁴⁴ Furthermore, H.V. Nelles argues that “hegemony and resistance can be acted

⁴² Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists*.

⁴³ H.V. Nelles, *The Art of Nation Building: Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentenary* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 69.

⁴⁴ Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists*, 9.

out in the same public space.”⁴⁵ Thus, each event presented opportunities for the articulation of counter-hegemonic discourses, particularly by First Nations who turned their inclusion as spectacle around to reinforce their part in the past.

Into the twentieth century, the federal government drew upon similar strategies in staging national commemorations to strengthen Canadian unity, although the form and messages imparted in the post Second World War era were qualitatively different. Prior to the Second World War and the development of commercialized spectacle, historical pageantry was a popular form of commemoration⁴⁶ because it was a visual spectacle that could appeal to all elements in society.⁴⁷ Moreover, historical pageantry allowed organizers to invent tradition by presenting a limited representation of the past. In Canada’s 1927 Diamond Jubilee of Confederation, for instance, organizers met the challenge of cultivating a Canadian nationalism by urging communities to focus on the recent past and Canada’s future. The pageant in Ottawa, which “faithfully reproduced the National Committee’s historical paradigm,” included a number of floats which “celebrated such milestones of modernisation as the telephone, credited with joining together scattered settlements into a single interdependent community; the evolution of electric lighting” and the triumph of modern industry and agriculture.⁴⁸

The objectives of national unity reappeared in Canada’s 1967 Centennial. Helen Davies argues that the celebrations’ objectives were to “bolster national pride and

⁴⁵ H.V. Nelles, “Historical Pageantry and the ‘Fusion of the Races’ at the Tercentenary of Quebec, 1908,” *Histoire Social/Social History* 29 (1996), 395.

⁴⁶ David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry: The Uses and Traditions in the Early Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990).

⁴⁷ Robert Cupido, “Appropriating the Past: Pageants, Politics and the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* (1998), 161.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 165-166.

reinforce political unity.”⁴⁹ However, while previous national and regional celebrations tried to dampen ethnic and regional differences in Canada, the 1967 Centenary and Exposition celebrated them. It may be ironic, but national unity was now to be found in Canada’s diversity. However, this vision of national unity required mass participation for its legitimation. The Centennial Commission recognized this centenary was occurring at a time of challenge to the establishment and the status quo, therefore it preferred participation of any kind – even criticism – to being met with apathy and indifference. The Commission, Davies argues, had to allow a broad range of interpretations in the centenary, so that “participants were encouraged to express their own unique view of Canada in a highly personal way. Organizers walked a fine line, as they tried to manage the event in an effort to realize the official mandate, while, at the same time, trying not to impose a particular vision or objective on Canadians.”⁵⁰

Thus, the Canadian Interfaith Conference, acting as an arm of the Centennial Commission, tried to involve as many faith groups in the celebrations as possible by focusing on inclusiveness and equality among faiths. Gary Miedma argues that this was a symbolic break from the dominant Protestantism of mainstream English-Canadian society and reflected the increasing diversity and pluralism of Canada.⁵¹

Equality and autonomy only extended so far, as Richard Gordon Kicksee demonstrates in his study of First Nations and the 1967 Centenary. Centennial officials would not allow the free expression of First Nations in the national centenary, but could

⁴⁹ Helen Davies, “The Politics of Participation: A Study of Canada’s Centennial Celebrations” (Ph.D. Diss., University of Manitoba, 1999), i.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁵¹ Gary Miedema, “For Canada’s Sake: the Centennial Celebrations of 1967, State Legitimation and the Restructuring of Canadian Public Life,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 86 (Spring 2000), 141.

not carry on the celebrations successfully without their input. Therefore, the officials “set the context of their interactions with Amerindians seeking centennial grants” and “used this power to limit the range of centennial expressions of Amerindians, and to exploit Amerindian projects as promotional events for their own public relations campaigns.”⁵² But, had First Nations refused to participate in the centenary and Expo '67 to protest the liberal hegemonic overtones, they would have reinforced the status quo and permitted easy appropriation of their culture. Rather, Natives directly confronted liberal hegemony by publicly celebrating their own nationalism and culture within the larger celebrations.⁵³

In BC's centennial celebrations, state hegemony and counter hegemonies also competed. Through its narrow interpretation of British Columbia's past –as founded by daring and entrepreneurial pioneers who conquered a dangerous landscape – the government went about creating a new provincial hegemony. Moreover, this hegemony implied a tradition; an entrepreneurial spirit infected the past and promised further progress and development. These messages - intended to unite British Columbians for the purposes of resource and infrastructure expansion - required continuous repetition, so as to become unremarkable, commonplace and normalized. The profusion of centennial symbols and slogans, traveling shows, community celebrations, and written history rendered this new hegemonic discourse largely invisible. In 1958, the populace replicated such discourses through its participation in traveling road shows, beard-growing contests and similar narratives in community history. Such acceptance could not have occurred without accommodation. The government recognized that its hegemonic

⁵² Richard Gordon Kicksee, “Scaled down to Size: Contested Liberal Commonsense and the Negotiation of Indian Participation in the Canadian Centennial Celebrations and Expo 67, 1963-1967” (M.A. Thesis, Queen's University, 1995), 65.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 20.

control over BC's master narrative could not be maintained without allowing regions, and communities, some freedom – or democratic participation as they labeled it - to contribute to that narrative. Of course, as we have seen, hegemony is never absolute. In 1958, First Nations were the first to challenge it. In examining government discourses over three centenary celebrations, this dissertation also illustrates the unevenness of hegemony and its vulnerability to new ideologies, and new counter-hegemonic impulses. The ways in which hegemony was maintained – virtually unchanged since 1958 – proved to be no match for rising environmental, labour and counterculture discourses that overshadowed the government's development hegemonic. As Hobsbawm notes, "the study of invented traditions cannot be separated from the wider study of the history of society, nor can it expect to advance much beyond the mere discovery of such practices unless it is integrated into a wider study."⁵⁴

As such, this study seeks to locate the role of BC's centenaries in the wider political and social history of the province. Since they were recurring events under the W.A.C. Bennett government, their study also provides a view of the dramatic changes BC underwent during these thirteen years. These highly politically motivated commemorations cannot be seen as any less important than any other project geared towards the growth and development of BC. Although ritual is often identified with religion, David Kertzer maintains that ritual is "an integral part of politics" in secular industrial societies. Contemporary leaders, like those of centuries past, "attempted to design and employ rituals to arouse popular emotions in support of their legitimacy and

⁵⁴ Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition*, 12.

to drum up popular enthusiasm for their policies.”⁵⁵ While municipal governments, service clubs, individuals and ethnic communities all contributed to and took initiative in BC’s three celebrations they were, foremost, creations of the W.A.C. Bennett provincial government.

Chapter One, “Perennial Centennial: The Origins and Politics of Centenary Celebrations in British Columbia,” introduces the political context in which W.A.C. Bennett and Social Credit operated, and the province building rationale for celebrating these centenaries in such an elaborate and costly way. The chapter demonstrates that the effort the government put into these celebrations was by no means accidental or inevitable. Previous governments had allowed other centenaries and jubilees to pass with little fanfare; this government seized the expediency of these centennials to further its political aims. Although a separate Centennial Committee was established to carry out the celebrations at an arm’s length from government, it was a government-designed, government-staffed and government-funded entity. Following W.A.C. Bennett’s instructions, the Committee took great pains through its terms of reference and the province-wide scale of centennial events to create truly provincial celebrations in which to construct a provincial identity.

Themes introduced in this chapter will be teased out in the following two. Chapter Two, “New ‘Gold Rushes’: The Promotion of Industry and Tourism in BC’s Centennial Celebrations,” argues that the government used the centenaries, not only to celebrate the province’s industry, but also to advance it. High on Bennett’s priority list for the centenary was a trade fair to publicize BC resources and manufacturers not only to

⁵⁵ David I. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics and Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 14.

British Columbia but to the world. At the same time, the provincial government, the Tourist Promotion and Hospitality Subcommittee, municipalities and private tourist operators, worked together to capitalize on the potential windfall centennial tourism would bring in 1958. When revenues did not meet the government's expectations, it redoubled its efforts in the following centenaries by focusing particularly on the American market. Tourist promotion also worked towards the objectives of unity by exhorting British Columbians to visit different regions of the province. This chapter also explores the tensions the Committee had to navigate between staging a fun celebration meant for the residents of British Columbia, while also courting outside revenue and investment.

The efforts of the Committee and the government for its citizens is the focus of Chapter Three, "Running on the Same Ticket': Fostering a Provincial Identity Through Democratic Participation." As mass participation was the key to the success of the centenaries, the Centennial Committee pitched the celebrations as being democratic, whereby individuals, businesses and communities could participate as they saw fit, thus legitimizing the occasions. However, as the celebrations represented the character and future ambitions of the province, the government committee definitely tried to control them through copious direct and indirect suggestion, lest they devolve into a display of self-interest and disharmony. Further, the Committee wanted all communities – regardless of size – to participate in this province-wide celebration, to reinforce this government's commitment to the hinterlands and to cultivate an overall provincial identity. To this end, government officials toured the province during the centenaries, each community could garner matching funds from government for commemorative

projects, and the Centennial Committee organized simultaneous celebrations all around the province as well as dispatching traveling entertainments equally amongst regions.

Chapter Four, “‘Hundred Years of Progress’: Constructing a Daring Past to an Expansive Future” interrogates the elaborate historical motifs, re-creations and events the Centennial Committee introduced for the 1958 centennial. It argues that to bolster political aims, the government necessarily had to display a selective history for public consumption. Therefore, public spectacle either celebrated the travails of explorers, miners and pioneers who traversed the rugged provincial landscape as a corollary to present infrastructure construction, or presented a mythic, hollywoodized Western motif that all communities could rally behind despite their geographic diversity and varied histories. In these public representations white males were invited to participate and were celebrated; women and First Nations had few parts to play.

This did not mean that First Nations culture was ignored. One of the most interesting aspects of the centenaries was the government’s representation of First Nations peoples. Chapter Five “‘Indians on Warpath over Centennial’: First Nations Representation, Participation and Resistance,” argues that, for its symbolic and tourist value, the government utilized all manner of Native art and culture, but denied a similar platform to the Native peoples themselves. Rather, the government encouraged Native peoples to participate only as one of many ethnic groups in the province. Many outspoken First Nations leaders boycotted the celebrations, but others participated if only to use the limited space they were granted to teach future generations and non-Natives about their culture. By the mid-1960s, when First Nations activists had pushed their issues into the national consciousness, ordinary British Columbians demanded more

recognition of First Nations in their culture and history. In the two later centennials, the Committee gave First Nations a higher profile, but did not fundamentally change its original opinion of their part in the celebrations. The Committee's superficial amends did not satisfy BC's main Native organizations.

The inability of the government to adjust to new mores and social conditions is also the theme of the last chapter, "'Common Citizen's Cuckolded': The End of the Centennial Era." The British Columbia of 1971 was far different from that of 1958. New voices, those of youth, counterculture, environment and labour emerged in opposition to the final centenary. This celebration received a much more negative press than the previous two. Publicity stunts, letters to the editor, and letters to the Centennial Committee itself demonstrated British Columbians' dissatisfaction with celebration when the province was facing more serious issues, such as environmental degradation and unemployment. Furthermore, these centennial critiques often went beyond the occasion to criticize its sponsor - the Social Credit government. These discourses reveal what would become apparent to W.A.C. Bennett the following election year; his carefully cultivated post-war consensus to all-out expansion had ended.

These chapters rely on numerous governmental records to present a political, cultural and social history of the province through the lens of the centenaries during these rapidly changing thirteen years. They draw primarily upon memos, correspondence, reports and speeches contained in nearly 200 boxes of records from the three centenaries housed in the British Columbia Archives.⁵⁶ Despite the breadth of materials originally

⁵⁶ British Columbia Archives (hereafter, BCA), British Columbia Centennial '58 Committee, GR-1448, BCA, Canadian Confederation Centennial Committee, GR-1449, and BCA, British Columbia Centennial '71 Committee, GR-1450.

collected by the Centennial Committees, some documents and context were missing from these records but were present in records of Premier Bennett and the Provincial Secretary.⁵⁷ Because these were province-wide celebrations, where communities were also responsible for organization, I also consulted the records of local centennial committees in Prince Rupert, Vancouver and Nanaimo.⁵⁸ Other government records consisted of published reports, books and periodicals.⁵⁹ Finally, I was fortunate to interview the centenaries' primary figure, Chairman Lawrence J. Wallace, before he passed away in 2006. Sitting in his memorabilia-rich den and sharing a conversation about the centenaries brought immediacy to the topic often absent in archival documents. Despite my criticisms of the centenaries, L.J. Wallace was admirable for his commitment to them and to the province.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ BCA, Premier's Records, 1953-1972, GR-1414, Simon Fraser University Archives (hereafter SFU), W.A.C. Bennett Fonds, F-55, BCA, Provincial Secretary, GR-1537 and BCA, Records of the Deputy Provincial Secretary, GR-1661.

⁵⁸ Prince Rupert City and Regional Archives (hereafter PRCRA), R.G. Large Fonds, City of Vancouver Archives (hereafter CVA), British Columbia Centennial Committee Fonds, MSS. 178, CVA, British Columbia Centennial '71 Committee Fonds, MSS. 18, CVA, Harold Merilees Fonds, MSS. 426, CVA, Vancouver Centennial Committee Fonds, MSS. 271, Nanaimo Community Archives (hereafter NCA), Frank J. Ney Fonds, 1993 008 A, NCA, NCA, Nanaimo Centennial (1958) Committee Fonds, and NCA, Nanaimo Centennial (1966, 1967) Committee Fonds.

⁵⁹ These included reports such as, British Columbia Centennial Committee, *The Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee* (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1959), British Columbia Centennial '71 Committee, *The Celebration of the Century 1871-1971: The Report of the British Columbia Centennial '71 Committee*, (Victoria BC, 1973), booklets such as Canadian Confederation Centennial Committee of British Columbia, *Centennial Suggestions for Local Centennial Committees in British Columbia for 1966 and/or 1967* (1965) and British Columbia Centennial Committee, *A Guide to Community Organization of the British Columbia Centennial Celebrations* (1956), and periodicals such as *British Columbia Centennial Committee Newsletter* (1956-1958) *Report of the Department of Recreation and Conservation* (1957-1967).

⁶⁰ L.J. Wallace, personal interview, 23 January 2003. I also relied on transcripts of other oral interviews with Wallace and key governmental figures, for example, BCA,

Of course, government records and reports only give one side and reveal one agenda for the centenaries. Since the centenaries were billed as being for every British Columbian, citizens were not reluctant to let their opinions be known. Many of these voices came through letters to the centenary officials, but also in editorials and letters to the editors of provincial and local papers. These sources reflect an alternative interpretation of the centennials and government agendas, and I am indebted to these letter-writers for sharing these counter-hegemonic discourses, and allowing them to form the basis of Chapters Five and Six.

Before delving into the following chapters, some terminology should be addressed. In this dissertation I conceive of the three centennial committees – British Columbia Centennial Committee, the Canadian Confederation Centennial Committee of British Columbia, and the Centennial '71 Committee – to be one; I alternatively call it the Centennial Committee, the Committee, or the Central Committee, since in the final report of each centenary, this body simply refers to itself as the Centennial Committee. In instances where further clarification is necessary, I refer to it as the 1958 Committee, the 1966/67 Committee or the 1971 Committee. As elucidated in Chapter One, the Board of Directors who oversaw the three centenaries, and directed the course of the celebrations, remained virtually the same. The ex-officio Board, consisting of Cabinet Ministers and civil servants, was the core of the Committee and made final decisions on issues various subcommittees brought to them. In this way the Board, reflecting the wishes of the Social Credit government, retained much control over the way in which the centenaries

were officially celebrated. And, as the following chapters will also attest, much of the direction came from W.A.C. Bennett himself.

A good deal of this dissertation examines the government and Committee's relations with First Nations. Many terms are used to identify Canada's original inhabitants; but following recent scholarly work, this dissertation uses First Nations as a noun, Native and Aboriginal as adjectives, and where there are quotations, the original wording of "Indian" is retained.⁶¹

This dissertation endeavors to connect a historical subject and a methodological approach, which at first glance, may appear antithetical to each other. The subject – W.A.C. Bennett's resource-driven twenty-year reign – has traditionally attracted political and economic analysis. Further, that regime, and its leader, seemed simple and uncultured. The methodology – cultural theory – has traditionally been applied to cultural producers in the more established provinces of Quebec and Ontario, where custom and a sense of the past appeared more ingrained. However, through the lens of BC's three centenaries, a clearer picture of Bennett's government as cultural producers and hegemony makers emerges. This was not a government that was solely concerned with economy and expansion; it attempted to province build by instituting a new hegemonic discourse. Further, through its maintenance of this discourse, it also contributed to the province's static "culture" by funding community parks, museums and archives.

⁶¹ Olive Dickason, *Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times* (Toronto: McClelland, 1992), 17, James S. Frideres & Rene R. Gadacz, *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada* (Toronto: Pearson Education, 1995), 20 and Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990), xi.

At some point during the writing of this dissertation, I realized the BC centennial celebrations were not only the fodder of my research, but they had enabled me, and my counterparts, to do research on this province. At times of self-doubt, when I questioned my choice of dissertation topic, I only had to become aware of my surroundings to be reassured. This was particularly so, where I did the majority of my research, at the provincial archives in Victoria; the whole museum/archive complex was constructed as the Federal-Provincial commemorative project in 1967. Inside, I joined other researchers engaged in a quest to uncover facets of this province's past. Even outside of the building, where I took lunch on the concrete steps, the carillon bells – donated by the Netherlands community - reminded me that they too were a legacy of this event. In Prince Rupert and Vancouver, archives constructed as community projects in 1958 and 1971 house valuable documents related to local and provincial history, as my use of these archives attest. As I completed revisions, I fact-checked in the Terrace public library, a well-used downtown hub, constructed as a community project in 1967. Academic historians rarely speak of, or experience, “lived history” but I was acutely aware that I was using these resources in a manner planned some fifty years prior. Province building as Social Credit had originally conceived of it died in the 1970s, but a different legacy of the celebrations remains.

**Chapter One:
Perennial Centennial: The Origins and Politics of Centenary Celebrations
in British Columbia**

“Everything grows well in British Columbia, even Centennials.” So began a 1971 editorial in the *Calgary Herald*. After describing the spate of centenaries British Columbia had celebrated in just over a decade, the author concluded, “when B.C. is wished a happy birthday, it doesn’t really seem necessary any more to complete the salutation by adding the usual ‘and many of them.’ Leave it to B.C. It will see to that.”¹ In a similar vein, a 1966 article entitled “Celebrating Centenaries Becomes a Profession in BC” poked fun at the succession of celebrations in the province, saying, “we must be the most experienced celebrators in the world.” The author mused that following the anticipated 1971 centennial British Columbia should set up a new curriculum in its universities. After study on “commemorative song writing, judging essay, poster and architectural contests, unveiling of corner stones (and) ribbon cutting” students could emerge with a B.C., a “Bachelor of Celebration” through which they “would be recognized as a fully qualified celebration advisor.” The article finishes with a jab, suggesting a mandatory course in economics because “it’s doubly important that this course be given to British Columbians who seem to have a complete disregard for the costs involved in celebrating.”²

The tone of these two articles represents the incredulity many people demonstrated towards British Columbia’s self-professed love for celebrating. But this centennial fever arose in a particular context: the post-war optimism and boosterism of

¹ Reprinted from the *Calgary Herald* in the *Trail Daily Times*, 25 May 1971.

² *Williams Lake Tribune*, 23 March 1966.

the W.A.C. Bennett Social Credit administration of 1952 – 1972. Such infectious government optimism in the future had not been seen for forty years. Even before the election of Social Credit, the Coalition government had taken steps to foster public works like the Hope-Princeton and Hart Highway and to develop new industries such as allowing the Aluminum Company of Canada to build a hydroelectric plant at Kemano and an aluminum smelter at Kitimat. Post-war demand for the province's natural resources fuelled an economic boom that lasted until the 1970s. Lumber was particularly valued for Canadian residential housing and for rebuilding a post-war Britain.³ The value of BC's fixed assets rose from \$157, 494,103 to \$1,424,678,204 between 1952 and 1972, and the population of the province doubled in the same time.⁴ Although Joy Parr has cautioned historians that Canadians did not rush headlong into mass purchasing in the post war years, as did their American counterparts,⁵ Canadians and British Columbians in the 1950s were more likely than ever to be able to afford leisure and luxuries denied to them during the depression and war. A whole new range of products was introduced to capitalize on the stability post-war economics promised; television is illustrative of this shift. By 1960, 59 television stations in Canada could reach 90% of the population,⁶ and symbolized a new age of leisure and popular culture.

³ Patricia E. Roy and John Herd Thompson, *British Columbia: Land of Promises* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2005), 142 and 148.

⁴ Province of British Columbia, Department of Finance. Financial and Economic Review, 1971 quoted in Stephen G. Tomblin, "In Defense of Territory: Province-Building under W.A.C. Bennett" (Ph.D. diss., University of British Columbia 1985), 52.

⁵ Joy Parr, *Domestic Goods: the Material, the Moral, and the Economic in the Postwar Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

⁶ Doug Owram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 88.

Post-war spending also extended to the state, which was bringing in far more revenue than in decades previous, and was thus able to accelerate spending. The budget in these two decades (expressed in 1971 dollars) grew by a whopping 500 percent.⁷ This Social Credit government was fortunate to lead during a favorable economic climate, where it could translate its big ideas for the province into big actions. In these decades the province greatly expanded its infrastructure, especially in the North, and the government itself grew.⁸

Historians have examined the politics and economics of this period of growth, but little is known about the celebrations that accompanied this expansion and optimism.⁹ This chapter endeavors to explain the centennials' origins and, in so doing, locate them as an important part of the political culture of the province under W.A.C. Bennett. There was nothing inevitable about the celebrations, nor the elaborate way that the provincial government went about commemorating the centennials. Social Credit took advantage of the centenaries that coincided with its project of province building and the shaping of government cultural policies.

The term "province building" originally appeared a 1960s article by political scientists Edwin R. Black and Alan Cairns, who coined it to explain the actions of the Quebec Lesage government and other provincial governments in seeking economic and political autonomy from the federal government. In the 1960s, they argue, more secure

⁷ Walter D. Young, "The Legislature Under WAC Bennett", Political Science BC Project Working Paper: University of Victoria, 1983.

⁸ See for instance, Donald E. Blake, *Two Political Worlds: Parties and Voting in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1985); Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); David Mitchell, *W.A.C. Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1983).

⁹ See the Introduction for this historiography.

and competent provincial administrations and greater revenue generation through resource exploitation led more provinces to resist federal authority.¹⁰ After the genesis of this term, a plethora of political scientists employed it in many ways to explain provincial growth, leading critics to note that “province building” had become “a tag that applies to some generalizations about changes in the structure and activity of provincial states.”¹¹ A review of work that employed this concept found so much variation in the term’s usage and its measurement, that R.A. Young, Phillippe Faucher and Andre Blais conclude it should be abandoned because province building “obscures more than it reveals” but acknowledge that the term may have “served some historical purpose.”¹²

Scholars who study the time period in which “province building” was first applied, still find an interpretive framework appropriate to study ambitious post-war provincial governments. In British Columbia, this term seems particularly apt in describing the W.A.C. Bennett years, although here too it is used unsystematically. John R. Wedley tends to posit province building as an economic process to open up the northern reaches of the province to potential trade, while Stephen G. Tomblin is more faithful to Black and Cairn’s original conception - that W.A.C. Bennett pursued industrial and infrastructure growth as a means to defend provincial autonomy. Each author takes exception to the other’s conception of province building,¹³ but the motivation in using it is the same. “One clue to the latent functions of this concept,” Young et al. claim, “is the

¹⁰ Edwin R. Black and Alan C. Cairns, “A Different Perspective on Canadian Federalism,” *Canadian Public Administration* 9 (1966): 27-44.

¹¹ R.A. Young et al., “The Concept of Province-Building: a Critique,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 17 (1984), 783.

¹² *Ibid.*, 815 and 818.

¹³ Stephen G. Tomblin, “Building British Columbia: A Response to John Wedley ‘A Development Tool: W.A.C. Bennett and the PGE Railway,’” *BC Studies* 128 (Winter 2000/01): 75-80.

highly evaluative and emotive terms which often accompany it”; leaders themselves used the language of defensive province building, so it should not be surprising that scholars are drawn to it.¹⁴

Province building, in its popular usage, is probably better conceived as nation building on a provincial scale. This dissertation abides by this looser term since nation building has wider ramifications, but it still concedes that the Bennett government was particularly defensive. As an economic strategy, nation building or province building entailed building capacity for economic prosperity; this was true for Canada and its provinces during the National Policy,¹⁵ and was true for BC governments starting with Richard McBride.¹⁶ What changed during the Bennett regime, as will be explained shortly, was a greater role in infrastructure building to assist economic generation, particularly in the North. Bennett’s attitude was also notable because he had unlimited confidence in the province’s potential - no project was too large for the state to undertake. Nation building has also come to signify the construction of national unity by mollifying different groups in a population;¹⁷ this complements my conception of province building.

Until the 1958 centennial, British Columbians had done very little collectively and publicly to celebrate their past by marking historical milestones.¹⁸ Neither the golden

¹⁴ Young et al., “The Concept of Province-Building,” 817.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 799.

¹⁶ Tomblin, “Building British Columbia,” 80.

¹⁷ See Robert Cupido, “Appropriating the Past: Pageants, Politics and the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation. *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* (1998): 155-186 and H.V. Nelles, *The Art of Nation-building: Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec’s Tercentenary* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

¹⁸ One government exception is the celebration of the centenary of Simon Fraser’s descent of the Fraser River in 1908. That year the provincial government made the Provincial Archives a separate department under the Provincial Secretary with its own funding and a new mandate including an interest in provincial history outside of archival

Jubilee of mainland BC becoming a colony¹⁹ nor the centenary of Simon Fraser's historic journey received much notice.²⁰ As the 100th anniversary of the beginning of colonial status (on Vancouver Island) drew near, the Coalition government considered commemorating a "century of government and public institutions" in British Columbia in 1949,²¹ but for whatever reason these plans never came to fruition. Little was done the following year, in 1950, the 100th anniversary of the appointment of Vancouver Island's first governor, Richard Blanshard.²² The Department of Education encouraged schools to have special assemblies²³ and commissioned a "ten minute (radio) program to commemorate the Blanshard Centenary" to be broadcast in schools.²⁴ The British Columbia Historical Association, however, marked the anniversary by holding an essay contest for provincial post-secondary students on topics relating to the founding of the colony. The Victoria Section of the Association also opened its regular meetings to the general public, and Willard E. Ireland, the provincial librarian and archivist, gave a special lecture on "The Government of Richard Blanshard."²⁵ The limited and pedagogical nature of these commemorative events contrasts starkly with the lively way

material. As such, the provincial archivist mounted a historical exhibit about Fraser that was displayed in New Westminster, Vancouver and Victoria. See Chad Reimer, "The Making of British Columbia History" (Ph.D. diss., York University, 1995).

¹⁹ One writer to the editor appealed to the "powers that be" to take up celebrating the Jubilee of mainland BC becoming a crown colony. *Vancouver Province*, 9 November 1907.

²⁰ The *Victoria Times*, remorseful that the centenary of Alexander Mackenzie's route to the sea was neglected in 1893, led a campaign for New Westminster to celebrate Fraser's centenary in 1808. *Kamloops Sentinel*, 24 and 28 August 1906; 12 November 1907.

²¹ *Vancouver Province*, 8 July 1947.

²² *Victoria Daily Colonist*, 28 February 1950.

²³ *Ibid.*, 23 February 1950.

²⁴ British Columbia, Department of Education, *Public Schools of the Province of British Columbia, Seventy-ninth Annual Report*, (1949/1950), 129.

²⁵ British Columbia Historical Association, "Notes and Comments," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* 14 (1950): 109-111.

1958 was celebrated. The chairman of the '58-'71 centenaries hypothesizes that these centennials were too soon after the end of the war to celebrate.²⁶ It is likely that the centennial was simply not a priority for the Coalition that underwent a leadership change precisely at the time they needed to plan a commemoration. A stable government, such as the Bennett administration, was in a better position to sponsor events outside the regular functions of government.

Support for celebrating a centenary in 1958 started to galvanize during 1955. In January 1955, *Vancouver Sun* columnist Barry Mather floated the idea for “some provincial authority” to mount a centenary celebrating the “birth” of BC in 1858 with the creation of the crown colony of (mainland) British Columbia. The *Vancouver Sun* reported that Mather’s suggestion was garnering “enthusiastic support” from many corners, including Vancouver’s archivist Major J.S. Matthews, deputy minister of Trade and Industry Thomas L. Sturgess, and Jim Hughes, the vice-president of the Vancouver Tourist Association.²⁷ Within days, Willard Ireland and the British Columbia Historical Association suggested that the provincial government take the initiative and begin planning for the centenary.²⁸ In the legislature, Co-operative Commonwealth Federation leader Arnold Webster read out Mather’s column and told the Social Credit government that it should begin preparation immediately.²⁹

It is unclear how much heed the provincial government paid to this public discourse, although the endorsement by such organizations as the Vancouver Board of

²⁶ British Columbia Archives (hereafter BCA), Provincial Archives of British Columbia Interview Collection, 1974-1987 (hereafter PABCIC), T3835, Transcript, L.J. Wallace interviewed by Derek Reimer, 23 April 1981.

²⁷ *Vancouver Sun*, 22 January 1955.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 26 January 1955.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 28 January 1955.

Trade and the BC Chamber of Commerce likely made celebrating the centenary more agreeable to the government.³⁰ The final report of the 1958 celebrations intimated that the idea germinated within cabinet and made no reference to any public initiative.³¹ In a 1975 interview, Ray Williston, who had been in cabinet and became a director of the Centennial Committee, recalled “sitting in cabinet one day, and I think it was 1955, and suggesting that British Columbia was approaching its centennial in 1958 and didn’t the executive council think it was time that somebody started to do a little planning about this matter.” As Minister of Education, he was a natural proponent of this idea, but he admitted Willard Ireland or someone else probably planted the idea with him. Nevertheless, Premier Bennett gave Williston and Agricultural Minister Kenneth Kiernan the task of writing a report on how to celebrate the centenary to present to cabinet.³²

After the government announced that it was considering celebrating in 1958, and while Williston and Kiernan were formulating their report, the issue of the centennial appeared in the press again – but this time in a much more heated exchange. Several historians and public figures led by James K. Nesbitt, a newspaper columnist and executive member of the Victoria section of the BC Historical Society, decried the anticipated centennial as a “phoney” since British Columbia only came into existence

³⁰ BCA, British Columbia, Premier’s Records 1953-1972 (hereafter BC Premier’s Records), GR-1414, Box 41, File 6, Reg T. Rose, General Manager Vancouver Board of Trade to W.A.C. Bennett, 20 May 1955, and Charles K. Bantock, Manager BC Chamber of Commerce to W.A.C. Bennett, 20 May 1955.

³¹ British Columbia Centennial Committee, *The Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee*, (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1959), 14. It states “early in 1955, the Hon. W.K Kiernan and the Hon. R.G. Williston were appointed a committee of two to bring in a report to the Provincial Cabinet on the subject of a British Columbia Centennial Celebration.”

³² BCA, PABCIC, T1375, transcript, Ray Williston interviewed by Derek Reimer, 7 October 1975.

geographically in 1866, and politically in 1871.³³ Further, this faction felt that celebrating 1958 as the birth of British Columbia would totally disregard the role of Vancouver Island in the province's history. The government's interpretation of the beginning of the province, they argued, reeked of political favoritism. Nesbitt wrote that Premier Bennett's endorsement of the 1958 date suggests that he "panders to the much larger population of the mainland which wants to ride roughshod over Vancouver Island."³⁴

Another reporter and popular historian Bruce A. McKelvie disagreed with Nesbitt's claim of regional favoritism and argued that there was no more important date to the founding of the province than November 19, 1858 when the proclamation making BC a colony was read at Fort Langley.³⁵ Despite working for an island newspaper, McKelvie likely endorsed the date because of his ties to the historic fort as the author of one of its histories.³⁶ The public debate also softened some views. Willard Ireland

³³ *Vancouver Sun*, 15 June 1955 and *Victoria Daily Times*, 14 June 1955. The opponents of the 1958 date also included Victoria Mayor Claude Harrison and the MLA for Victoria, Lydia Arsens.

³⁴ *Victoria Daily Colonist*, 15 June 1955. This debate is likely a holdover from a split in the historical community earlier in the century and demonstrates deep-seated fractures over this area of BC's history. The British Columbia Historical Association was founded in 1922 as a provincial organization of historians. The BCHA fractured along regional lines only five years later; precisely over the issue of what date should be considered BC's birthday. Island members condemned the Native Sons of BC's suggestion that 1858 marked BC's beginning as "unhistorical" and felt that 1850 was a more accurate date for the province's birthday. Mainland members supported the 1858 date, since the founding of the mainland colony was the first instance where the term "British Columbia" was used. The disagreement led to separate branches of the association being formed. See Chad Reimer, "The Making of British Columbia History" and "'Provincial in Name Only': The Great Birthday Debate of 1926 and the Early Years of the British Columbia Historical Association," *BC Historical News* 35 (Winter 2001/2002): 2-7.

³⁵ *Victoria Daily Colonist*, 19 June 1955.

³⁶ With members of the Langley's local government, McKelvie helped unveil a cairn there in 1946, and published a history of Fort Langley the following year. Donald E.

agreed that the opponents were “technically” right, and the President of the BC Historical Society, Mrs. A.D. (Elsie) Turnbull, a long-time resident of Trail whose husband had served in the Coalition cabinet, suggested that commemoration occur in British Columbia during 1958, but should stem from the celebration of “The Year of the Gold Rush” and not the “birthday of BC.” Nevertheless, Premier Bennett insisted on 1958 as being the year for the province’s 100th birthday and that it should be celebrated accordingly. He shrugged off the criticism and prophetically said that if some disagreed with the date, BC could have celebrations in 1958, 1966 and 1971!³⁷

Certainly, the Social Credit government did not choose 1958 as the Centennial year solely for historical accuracy. Williston and Kiernan’s submitted report contained no statement on the historical importance of the date; rather it mentioned the considerable discussion in the press and concluded that “1958 is as suitable a date *as any that can be mentioned* and any date, either before or after that time could be the subject of controversy.”³⁸ On this basis, the provincial government formed a committee to carry out the 1958 centennial as a celebration of the province’s birth. One Victoria newspaper editorial suggested that government endorsement was important since it established BC’s birth date for the first time, which itself would go down in the history books.³⁹ However, the importance of the date may not even have been fixed in the mind of the Centennial’s

Waite, *The Langley Story Illustrated: an Early History of the Municipality of Langley* (Langley, B.C: Don Waite Pub, 1977), 205 and Bruce A. McKelvie, *Fort Langley: Outpost of Empire* (Vancouver: Vancouver Daily Province, 1947).

³⁷ *Victoria Daily Times*, 16 June 1955.

³⁸ BCA, BC Premier’s Records, GR-1414, Box 41, File 6, Report on the British Columbia Centennial by K. Kiernan & R. Williston, undated, Emphasis added. It is also notable that *The Tall Country*, the 1957 film commissioned by the British Columbia Centennial Committee, made no mention of the importance of 1858 despite the first third of the film addressing the province’s history. *The Tall Country*, Parry Films Ltd., 1958.

³⁹ *Victoria Daily Times*, 15 June 1955.

biggest booster, W.A.C. Bennett. During BC's 1971 centennial, in a speech to the delegates at the Victoria Constitutional Conference, he traced British Columbia's origins to 1849, not 1858!⁴⁰

The government's ambivalence to the historical accuracy of the date did nothing to dampen its enthusiasm for celebrating this centennial, or those that followed. It should not be surprising that the Social Credit government would champion and sponsor such a showy, elaborate, province-wide centennial. Indeed, this sort of celebration would let government showcase the advances British Columbia had made under its administration in the first few years of what would become a twenty-year tenure. Furthermore, the 1958 centennial and its successors were very much in keeping with the bold and optimistic style of this government. Despite receiving scant historical attention, the centennials were part and parcel of BC's progress in these decades.

Following W.A.C. Bennett's adoption of the Social Credit label in 1951, "Social Credit" came to signify a far different idea than it had in British Columbia in the two previous decades.⁴¹ Despite its origins as a movement based on monetary theory, Social Credit under Bennett came to signify a fresh free-enterprise alternative to the Liberal and Conservative parties of British Columbia and *the* party to oppose the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation/New Democratic Party of BC. However, it is difficult to identify a specific ideology or policy that encapsulated Social Credit's handling of

⁴⁰ Simon Fraser University Archives (hereafter SFU), W.A.C. Bennett Papers, 46-0-16, 34-6, speech by W.A.C. Bennett to Prime Minister and Fellow Premiers, 14 June 1971. He said that in 1871, when British Columbia joined Confederation, it was already 22 years old; which would mark its beginning at 1849.

⁴¹ See Leonard B. Kuffert, "Reckoning with the Machine': The British Columbia Social Credit Movement as Social Criticism, 1932 – 1952," *BC Studies* 124 (Winter 1999/2000): 9 – 39, and Chapter 4 in David J. Mitchell, *WAC Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre 1983).

government and its program of economic expansion and modernization from 1952 to 1972. The Social Credit government utilized a grab bag of political philosophies and policies, and apparently did not feel the need to articulate a particularly cohesive ideology.⁴² It drew upon populist discourses of “common sense” and “getting things done” which enjoyed wide appeal among citizens outside of Vancouver and Victoria, and in so doing created “a party based on small-town BC, where the fitness of ordinary citizens for governing was taken for granted.”⁴³ In its early days, Social Credit also promised to reverse the spread of foreign monopoly capitalism that had harmed small local businesses. In the breakthrough 1952 election campaign Bennett had continually repeated the mantra, “Social Credit stands for free enterprise without monopoly.”⁴⁴ Bennett’s cabinet also reflected the diversity of the province and helped ameliorate regional disparities, allowing British Columbians in all regions to feel they had a stake in government and the province.⁴⁵ Bennett himself, as a Kelowna hardware store proprietor, seemed to embody the populist impulse and sparked citizens’ imaginations with his big plans and big dreams for the province.

⁴² Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 280 and Martin Robin, *Pillars of Profit: The Company Province 1934-1972* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1973), 170.

⁴³ Donald E. Blake, “Value Conflicts in Lotusland: British Columbia Political Culture” in *Politics, Policy and Government in British Columbia*, ed. R.K. Carty, (Vancouver: UBC Press), 4.

⁴⁴ *Armstrong Advertiser*, 15 May 1952 quoted in Gordon Hak, “Populism and the 1952 Social Credit Breakthrough in British Columbia,” *Canadian Historical Review* 85 (June 2004), 293. Social Credit candidates received the majority of seats in rural Fraser Valley and the Interior because, Hak argues, small businessmen and operators formed a populist reaction to the changes wrought by the Coalition government’s ties to large private corporations, such as Alcan in the Northwest and Celgar in the Kootenays. However, Social Credit courted the same sort of corporations in its later administration.

⁴⁵ Barman, *The West Beyond the West*, 281.

Bennett often spoke about the bright future and vast potential he saw for British Columbia. In 1958 he prophesied that in 100 years BC “will have a total population of 25,000,000 people housed and employed in great new cities and vast industrial settlements stretching from the Yukon to the United States border.”⁴⁶ Bennett upped his projections less than a decade later, forecasting the population of the province at fifty million by 2067.⁴⁷ Believing that the potential of the province was unlimited, the Social Credit government embarked upon an ambitious program of rapid economic and developmental growth throughout the province, but particularly in its Northern reaches in the 1950s and 1960s. Although the expansion of the Pacific Great Eastern railway and highway construction programs had begun under the previous Coalition government, Bennett took the credit and acclaim for them in the 1950s.⁴⁸ Despite wearing a free enterprise mantle, he strongly believed that adequate public transportation facilities were necessary to entice private enterprise and expand the economy of the province. When pressed, Bennett characterized himself as a “state developer,” believing the state must encourage the expansion of small business lest the economy be stifled by a few private monopolies. The way to do this was through state ownership of highways and the railway.⁴⁹

To be sure, government involvement in infrastructure served a larger project, that of province building. Certainly, many authors have noted British Columbia’s

⁴⁶ *Daily Colonist*, 16 July 1958.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 31 December 1967.

⁴⁸ John R. Wedley, “Infrastructure and Resources: Governments and their Promotion of Northern Development in British Columbia, 1945-1975” (Ph.D.diss., University of Western Ontario, 1986) and George Woodcock, *British Columbia: A History of the Province* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1990), 235.

⁴⁹ BCA, W.A.C. Bennett Oral History Collection, T1675, 31-2, 3, transcript, W.A.C. Bennett interviewed by David Mitchell, 1976-78.

regionalism: the province is seen as distinct from Canada, and its regions as geographically and socially distinct from each other.⁵⁰ BC's leaders often felt misunderstood by the federal government, arguing that the lack of provincial autonomy had been to their detriment. Open tensions between the two governments arose throughout the twentieth century but reached their zenith in the W.A.C. Bennett years, particularly over power development.⁵¹ British Columbians conveyed a new confidence under his leadership. This was manifest in the expansion of the role of government, forays into new sectors, the brokering of international treaties, and aggressive marketing and modernizing of the province, above any federal concerns. Bennett was famous for his public disdain for Ottawa and federalism and a separatist bent. "British Columbia was never a willing bride in Canada," he told Peter C. Newman during Canada's Centennial Year. "Ottawa talks with a forked tongue, they don't think of us as a part of Canada. They just say 'We'll come out and see you sometime' – as though this were darkest Africa. They think of us as a goblet to be drained."⁵²

At the same time as Bennett sought to divest British Columbia of some of Ottawa's stranglehold, he confronted the problem of internal geographic regionalism and fragmentation that had plagued preceding governments. The composition of his cabinet and the cultivation of their populism was part of Social Credit's strategy to have all British Columbians feel they had a part in the future of the province. The fostering of a

⁵⁰ See Barman, *The West Beyond the West* and Philip Resnick, *The Politics of Resentment: British Columbia Regionalism and Canadian Unity* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000).

⁵¹ Norman J. Ruff, "British Columbia and Canadian Federalism," in *The Reins of Power: Governing British Columbia*, eds. J. Terence Morley et al., (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1983), 297.

⁵² *Vancouver Sun*, 18 February 1967.

cohesive provincial past through centennial celebrations was another part of this process. But a more tangible way to attain provincial cohesion was W.A.C. Bennett's "blacktop politics." During its first six years in office, Social Credit spent more money on highways and roads than in the entire history of the province to that point.⁵³ This expensive program was needed to unlock previously isolated areas for development but it also served to bind regions and communities together with ribbons of asphalt. "The people of BC loved the results," wrote Patrick McGeer, then BC Liberal Party leader. "Rising postwar incomes and the availability of cars at reasonable prices combined to give many citizens their first view of their own breathtaking scenery."⁵⁴

Bennett's Social Credit government further consolidated state links in infrastructure with the nationalization of the Blackball Ferry line in 1958. Despite an apparent reluctance to use public funds to operate the ferries, Bennett was eager to do so since he saw it as a vital part of an overall post-war reconstruction plan to build a provincial empire.⁵⁵ The new BC Ferry Corporation became an important symbol of the province's prosperity and modernity. One of Bennett's favored projects, it is notable that he showcased the corporation by holding a moonlight cruise on one of the shiny new vessels for Prime Minister Trudeau and the premiers during the 1971 Victoria Constitutional Conference.⁵⁶

Province building continued in the 1960s with power development. The province nationalized the British Columbia Electric in 1961, and stunned citizens and outsiders

⁵³ Mitchell, *W.A.C. Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia*, 260.

⁵⁴ Patrick McGeer, *Politics in Paradise* (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates, 1972), 187.

⁵⁵ Frank Edward Leonard, "W.A.C. Bennett and his Choice of State Enterprise: The 1958 Case of British Columbia Ferries" (M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria, 2002).

⁵⁶ Mitchell, *W.A.C. Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia*, 395.

alike by undertaking massive public hydroelectric projects on the Columbia and Peace Rivers. While the province was becoming involved in enterprise itself, Social Credit kept encouraging private investment in the resource sectors; forestry, oil and gas and the mining industry also expanded throughout these two decades. The material progress the province experienced was unprecedented, and in the words of Bennett's biographer, signaled the "rise" of British Columbia; although he perhaps overstated his claim that under Bennett "no frontier has ever experienced a more concerted push towards economic expansion; this was British Columbia's Great Leap Forward."⁵⁷

Throughout his economic expansion program, Bennett well understood the need to package and promote each milestone to reassure British Columbians they were indeed living "the Good Life," as he liked to call it. In the *West Beyond the West*, Jean Barman writes "Bennett's faith in material progress through rapid and concentrated resource development became almost a secular faith within the party and to a considerable extent across the province. Carefully choreographed celebrations accompanied each project's progress."⁵⁸ This was a government predisposed to showy displays. For instance, in 1959 when the government declared itself to be debt-free, Bennett held a flamboyant ceremony on the shores of Okanagan Lake in his home riding to celebrate wiping out the debt. On August first, festivities and sporting contests entertained thousands of citizens and government officials during the day. Once night fell, Bennett shot a flaming arrow at a barge loaded with cancelled bonds, and the 'bond-fire' lit the night sky.⁵⁹ Later, Bennett explained the significance of the symbolism of the ritual: "you want something

⁵⁷ Ibid., 257.

⁵⁸ Barman, *The West Beyond the West*, 281.

⁵⁹ Mitchell, *W.A.C. Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia*, 279.

that will stick in the minds of the people for years and years. People still talk in British Columbia about that, and all over the world, about the 'bond fire' in British Columbia. They don't know what it was about, but in centuries to come they'll talk in the universities about it."⁶⁰ To him, progress and ceremony were intertwined processes.

The Social Credit government, then, was engaging in a massive project of province building, and loudly boasting of its successes. The centennial celebrations fit well into the character of this administration. A reflection and an appreciation of the province's prosperity, and the fostering of new industries and institutions could all be realized through a centennial celebration. And in 1955, the embryonic centennial committee did not have to look far to see the benefits a celebration would bring. Both Alberta and Saskatchewan celebrated their golden jubilees in that year. The 1958 Centennial Committee eventually modeled parts of BC's celebrations on those of their neighbours, albeit in a more elaborate and costly form. Undoubtedly, when the cabinet saw what was being done for the citizens in those two provinces, it thought the same or better should be done for British Columbia.⁶¹ The government would also accrue significant praise in the process. Cabinet minister Wesley Black, reflecting upon the building of commemorative monuments in BC during 1958, some as simple as the planting of trees, remarked "you know, the genius of politics is that, you know, one has to

⁶⁰ BCA, W.A.C. Bennett Oral History Collection, T1675, 22-2, 9, transcript, W.A.C. Bennett interviewed by David Mitchell, 1976-78.

⁶¹ BCA, PABCIC, T3835, 4-1, 15, Transcript, Lawrence James Wallace interviewed by Derek Reimer, 23 April 1981.

get elected. Therefore, one takes credit for every doggone thing that comes along including planting a tree.”⁶²

While other government officials involved in the centennials may not have been as straightforward, commentators certainly linked Social Credit politics to the celebrations. Centennial critic James K. Nesbitt maintained his objection to the 1958 date since it would be a “lop-sided sort of birthday.” He pondered Bennett’s motives: “Wonder if he’s afraid he won’t be premier in 1966? Naturally enough he doesn’t want to take any chances on not being able to shine, as Mr. British Columbia, on so an important an occasion as a 100th birthday party.”⁶³ Others assumed that the date was chosen because ’71 was so distant, and that it happened to coincide with the six-year anniversary of Social Credit’s entrance into BC politics.⁶⁴ A letter writer to the *Vancouver Sun* shared three reasons that Social Credit might spend a few million dollars on the celebrations: “pageantry to brighten our otherwise dull lives”; to give the sagging tourist industry “a shot in the arm”; and lastly to provide “an unexcelled opportunity for the Social Credit government to indulge in a lot of indirect advertising.”⁶⁵

Reinforcement of the status quo, and self-congratulation, is always implicit in state-sponsored public ceremony. “Invented traditions” permeate celebrations which seek “to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which

⁶² BCA, PABCIC, T1410, 7-1, 2, transcripts, Wesley Black interviewed by W.J. Langlois, 23 June 1975.

⁶³ *Vancouver Sun*, 12 July 1955.

⁶⁴ *Farm and Ranch Review*, November 1956. The election of Social Credit and the reading of the proclamation at Fort Langley making it a British colony both occurred on August 2.

⁶⁵ *Vancouver Sun*, 10 September 1957.

automatically implies continuity with the past.”⁶⁶ In 1958, the very slogan “a century of progress” naturally drew attention to the province’s prosperity. Succeeding chapters will examine some of the discourses linking past and present in more detail. Here it is sufficient to point out that the reiteration of British Columbia’s exploration and gold rush past during the 1958 celebrations served to accustom British Columbians to the current expansion drive. At the time, a journalist covering the centenary for the *Toronto Star Weekly* perceptively noted that “it is a rather strange commentary that British Columbia approaches the start of its second century on the same note as it began the first – the launching of an all-out assault on the Fraser Canyon to unlock the hidden riches of the interior.”⁶⁷

Following the success of 1958, Centennial celebrations became a regular occurrence in the province, with each touted as being more important and elaborate than the past one. The government had the good luck to be able to capitalize on centenaries of seminal dates in the province’s history. With the national centennial on the horizon in 1967, the BC government decided, after all, to commemorate in 1966 the centenary of the union of the two colonies. Contradicting his earlier position in 1955 about the importance of the ’58 date, the premier declared that the 1966 celebrations would “be larger than 1958 because it was the merging of the two Crown colonies which really got British Columbia on the map.”⁶⁸ The same provincial committee oversaw both the 1966

⁶⁶ Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.

⁶⁷ Harold Hillard, “Think Big Act Big: That’s the way of this Booming Land where they’re Building Roads and Railways over Mountains, and Urban Skylines Rise out of the Wilds,” *Star Weekly Magazine*, 15 February 1958, 13.

⁶⁸ *Vancouver Province* 8 January 1970.

and 1967 activities, providing British Columbians with two years of celebrations. Nesbitt understood the appeal such popular events had by perceptively noting:

The citizens show they like centennial celebrations as long as they don't have to pay to get into events. Anything free goes over with a bang. No event, of course, is really for free because the citizens pay with their taxes. The public doesn't mind that, figuring they may as well get in on the gravy train. Why let the elected representatives have all the expensive beer and skittles to themselves?⁶⁹

Plans for celebrating the centenary of joining Confederation in 1971 came as early as 1967 when Bennett was asked whether anything special was planned for 1971. He replied "We've had many centennial celebrations in this province and some people might get fed up with it but it is doing something for our people. They have more knowledge of our province and Canada as a result so they're good things."⁷⁰ Again, the centenary of 1971 was to be bigger and better than the provincial celebration in 1966 since this one would mark "the emergence of British Columbia as a province, and Canada as a nation that stretched across the continent."⁷¹ At the conclusion of 1971 and over a decade of celebrating, Centennial Committee chairman Lawrence Wallace reassured centenary-weary British Columbians that while municipalities in BC might still celebrate centenaries, the next chance for another provincial one would not come again until 2049!⁷²

The decision to celebrate all the centennials and an unwillingness to prioritize their importance, added fuel to the charge that Social Credit used the centennials for

⁶⁹ *Vancouver Sun*, 17 December 1966.

⁷⁰ *Victoria Daily Times*, 24 January 1967.

⁷¹ *Vancouver Province* 8 January 1970.

⁷² *Victoria Daily Times*, 16 December 1971.

political posturing. In 1966, W.A.C. Bennett's snap decision to recognize the former capital, New Westminster, by paying the city's three million dollar debt to end tolls on the Queensborough Bridge drew fire from his political opponents. Despite holding a media blitz including Raymond Burr, a New Westminster native who played Perry Mason in a popular American television series, paying the last toll, Rae Eddie, the NDP MLA for the riding, was not invited to the ceremony. Therefore he concluded the event was "strictly for Social Credit propaganda."⁷³ Newspapers kept up such reporting and engaged in the ridiculous by anticipating new centenaries based on the rise of Social Credit in the future. The *Victoria Daily Times* saw beyond 1971 "in the misted distance, Premier W.A.C. Bennett's centenary in office,"⁷⁴ and the *Victoria Daily Colonist* thought that BC would get a good respite from centennials: "Twenty fifty-two – 100 years from that turning point in BC's history so often and fondly referred to by the premier – is a long way off."⁷⁵

The centennial celebrations also became a means by which the government could change direction. Social Credit's early administration, as exemplified by the 1958 centennial, was premised on encouraging and appreciating the province's wealth of natural resources, its industry, and expansion of public works. In comparison, Social Credit paid relatively little attention to culture or the arts.⁷⁶ However, the 1958 centennial allowed an avenue for the government to test drive new non-economic forays

⁷³ *Vancouver Sun*, 16 November 1966.

⁷⁴ *Victoria Daily Times*, 7 January 1966.

⁷⁵ *Victoria Daily Colonist*, 28 February 1969.

⁷⁶ BCA, PABCIC, T1410, 14-2, 1, transcript, W. Black interviewed by W.J. Langlois, 27 June 1975.

in society. If these forays were successful, the government could then include them in its regular mandate.

Thus, the 1958 centennial launched Social Credit's interest in heritage and heritage conservation. For instance, the centennial was responsible for instituting the first green and gold historic stop-of-interest markers that still dot British Columbia's highways. Later, the Department of Recreation and Conservation assumed this responsibility and expanded the program.⁷⁷ Heritage conservation started in 1957 when the Centennial Committee recommended the government restore Barkerville, the Cariboo gold-mining ghost town. With the government's assent, the Committee cleaned up the town, restored the cemetery, repaired and refurbished four historic buildings, and installed camping and picnicking facilities.⁷⁸ Following the centennial year and 5,000 visitors to the site, it became a park under Recreation and Conservation and a "Barkerville Restoration Advisory Committee" was set up under the Provincial Secretary to continue restoration work.⁷⁹ This expanded the responsibility of the government, but "had we not started in those days," Williston recalled, "there would have been relatively little left to restore around the province of British Columbia. We waited long enough as it is."⁸⁰ According to Wallace, the restoration of Barkerville for the '58 centennial "in essence began the whole historic heritage program of the province."⁸¹

⁷⁷ *The Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee*, 123.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 133-135.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 135 and 347.

⁸⁰ BCA, PABCIC, T1375, 8-2, 14, transcript, Ray Williston interviewed by Derek Reimer, 7 October 1975.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, T3835, 5-1, 9, transcript, L.J. Wallace interviewed by Derek Reimer, 19 May 1981.

Other cultural forms like arts and crafts, although supported by the 1958 Centennial Committee, did not receive regular government attention until succeeding centenaries. Once building a strong economic base was accomplished, the two later centennials, and the latter half of Bennett's administration, focused more on a cultural "maturity or coming of age" in the 1960s.⁸² In 1967 the government's so-called 'People's Budget' expanded the work laid down by the centennials, by setting up a Centennial Cultural Fund where interest from an endowment of five million dollars was to stimulate cultural development.⁸³ This was the first permanent assistance to cultural activities in the province.⁸⁴ W.A.C. Bennett claimed that he had always had a plan to develop infrastructure and institutions at the same time, since "one thing dovetails to the other." "We have to advance on all these fronts at once," he continued "and that is the vision, or that is the miracle of the first 20 years of Social Credit in British Columbia."⁸⁵

The centennial celebrations also reinforced the notion that British Columbians were now provided with the "good life." They were encouraged to think of their own recreational needs and aspirations through the centennials. Rather than a sole commemoration of the past, the celebrations were an important part of the project of the future. At the closing of two years of celebration in 1967, Bennett reflected that the centennials "provided enjoyment and relaxation and they were the cause of a cultural awakening which will grow in years to come through establishment of the Cultural Grant

⁸² *BC Government News*, November 1967.

⁸³ *BC Government News*, January-February 1967.

⁸⁴ Bruce William Milne, "Culture and Hegemony: The British Columbia Cultural Services Branch" (M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria, 1983), 64.

⁸⁵ BCA, W.A.C. Bennett Oral History Collection, T1675, 21-1, 8, transcript, W.A.C. Bennett interviewed by David Mitchell, 1977.

Fund.”⁸⁶ Similarly 1971 was “geared for the people” with commemorative projects like swimming pools, community centers, and libraries, reflecting an emphasis on relaxation and recreation.⁸⁷ These projects dovetailed with the general leap that British Columbia was taking - to make BC and hinterland communities into modern, livable, attractive communities in which to invest.

To meet the lofty aims the government had for the centenaries, it needed a body to organize and carry out the celebrations. It set up and funded a Central Committee to administer the centenaries; that committee is crucial to the analysis in the rest of this dissertation. A more detailed examination of the workings of the Committee and the centennials will allow an appreciation of its function, provide the context through which the province shaped the celebrations, and set the contours for the following chapters.

The Premier fully endorsed the suggestions in Williston and Kiernan’s 1955 report that the government set up a committee to coordinate a province-wide celebration. A Central Committee would avoid possible conflicts, and review proposals that various groups might put forward.⁸⁸ The ministers recommended that the committee be made up of various interests throughout the province, but only suggested Lawrence Wallace, then Director of Community Programmes, Department of Education, by name. Cabinet accepted the report and gave Williston and Kiernan the task of forming a committee, albeit reminding them that no direct government funds were yet available. As a result core members of the Committee, later to become the Board of Directors, were culled

⁸⁶ *Victoria Daily Times*, 2 January 1968.

⁸⁷ *Kamloops Daily Sentinel*, 5 November 1971.

⁸⁸ BCA, BC Premier’s Records, GR-1414, Box 41, File: 6, Report on the British Columbia Centennial by K. Kiernan and R. Williston, undated.

from government and extra-governmental ranks, since they could be paid their regular salaries while working on the centenary.⁸⁹ Wallace was chosen as the chairman likely as a result of his work with the Community Programmes Branch facilitating recreation and culture in communities all around the province,⁹⁰ and thus he became the first member of the Committee. On September 27, 1955 an Order-in-Council formalized the appointment of the rest of the Committee.⁹¹ The Board of Directors - the real heart of the Centennial Committee - was made up of cabinet ministers Ray Williston and Ken Kiernan, T.R.B. Adams from the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, Willard Ireland, the Provincial Librarian and Archivist, Alderman T.F. Orr from Vancouver, and Dr. Malcolm McGregor, a professor of Classics from the University of British Columbia. At a later date, in need of a “public relations Johnny,” Edward Fox from the BC Electric Company was appointed to the Board of Directors.⁹²

Cognizant of the short time available to plan the celebrations, Orr and Wallace sought advice from officials from Alberta and Saskatchewan who were just concluding their Golden Jubilees in 1955. More detailed plans for BC’s centenary celebration emerged from these visits. Wallace later recalled that the two jubilees “were diametrically opposed in some ways so we had to weigh out what we thought would be the best.”⁹³ After reviewing the two jubilees, their organization and activities, Orr and Wallace reported that the Alberta Jubilee suffered due to late planning as well as a lack of

⁸⁹ Eileen Williston and Betty Keller, *Forests, Power and Policy: The Legacy of Ray Williston* (Prince George: Caitlin Press, 1997), 92.

⁹⁰ BCA, PABCIC, T3835, 4-1, 16, transcript, L.J. Wallace interviewed by Derek Reimer, 23 April 1981.

⁹¹ *The Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee*, 15.

⁹² BCA, PABCIC, T3835, 4-1, 16, transcript, L.J. Wallace interviewed by Derek Reimer, 23 April 1981.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 15.

committee independence in finance and administration. They suggested that BC follow the organization of Saskatchewan, where, as a legislative body corporate, the jubilee committee enjoyed cooperation and independence because “it was looked upon as a Legislative Committee and not a Government Committee.”⁹⁴

Under this premise, the Board of Directors drafted a bill to set up the Centennial Committee as a body corporate, reasoning that the Committee would then “not be considered simply as a special governmental committee” and that this would allow for “simplification of financial operations.” They informed the premier that the sooner the bill was passed, the sooner plans for the centenary could proceed.⁹⁵ The bill, “An Act to provide for the Celebration of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Establishment of the Mainland Colony of British Columbia,” passed through the BC Legislature on February 23, 1956.⁹⁶ While the Opposition supported the principle of the bill, they could not allow it to pass before commenting on its broader political objectives. CCF leader Arnold Webster spoke of his hope that the celebrations would be non-partisan and would not “glorify any one party.” Other opposition MLAs assumed the centennial would allow

⁹⁴ BCA, British Columbia Centennial ‘58 Committee (hereafter BCC ‘58 Committee), GR-1448 Box 6, File: Alberta Centennial 1957, Report of Visit to Alberta’s and Saskatchewan’s Golden Jubilee Committee Offices by T.F. Orr and L.J. Wallace, 1 to 3 November 1955. A fuller explanation of the effects of Alberta’s late planning can be found in James Opp, “Prairie Commemorations and the Nation: The Golden Jubilees of Alberta and Saskatchewan, 1955,” in *Canadas of the Mind: The Making and Unmaking of Canadian Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Norman Hillmer and Adam Chapnick (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007): 214-233.

⁹⁵ BCA, BCC ‘58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 2, File: Drafts of Various Items, Draft Memorandum to: the Honorable the Premier, undated.

⁹⁶ *The Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee*, 17.

the government to “pat itself on the back and publicize itself.”⁹⁷ Broadly speaking, the act stipulated the set-up and duties of the Committee and its financing.⁹⁸

The government-initiated Centennial Committee received tremendous support. Although the cabinet was not particularly “historically oriented,” it approved of the Committee, and cabinet members all “played their part as it came along.” The Premier became an honorary chairman of the Committee, and as Minister of Finance, was not hesitant in granting financial support to it. As Williston later stated, “if he had it, we had it.”⁹⁹ By the time the 1958 Centennial was over, the provincial government had spent a respectable three million dollars on the celebrations.¹⁰⁰ This outlay approached the amount spent on other developmental projects and approximated the annual expenditures of some government departments.¹⁰¹

This expense is understandable given the range of activities the Committee undertook during the centennial year. While the Committee spent funds on office expenses and staff (although those on the Committee received no remuneration), almost fifty percent of the total was granted to BC’s communities to help defray the costs of

⁹⁷ *Vancouver Sun*, 24 February 1956.

⁹⁸ See Appendix A for the act.

⁹⁹ BCA, PABCIC, T1375, 9-1, 12, transcript, Ray Williston interviewed by Derek Reimer, 7 October 1975.

¹⁰⁰ *Victoria Daily Times*, 18 January 1961 and *The Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee*, 328. In comparison, Alberta’s Jubilee Committee spent a total of 2.6 million, but this was primarily on the two auditoriums in Edmonton and Calgary. Opp, “Prairie Commemorations,” 219.

¹⁰¹ For instance, the Okanagan Lake Bridge, opened by Princess Margaret in 1958, cost almost nine million dollars, while the Deas Island Tunnel cost three and a half million. *BC Government News*, February 1959, 3. In 1958, the Department of Public Works spent three and a half million, while the Department of Recreation and Conservation spent two million. Province of British Columbia, *Public Accounts*, (1958), E9.

local celebrations and permanent commemorative monuments.¹⁰² This went against the recommendations of the organizers of Alberta and Saskatchewan's Jubilees.

Saskatchewan warned the 1958 Centennial Committee not to give out any funds, while Alberta counseled the Committee to spend funds on one or two large capital projects, as they had done in building memorial Jubilee auditoria in Calgary and Edmonton. The Committee, acting on the directive of the premier, accepted neither suggestion. "W.A.C. Bennett said he didn't want large buildings built because that meant that we were going to spend all the money in two or three cities," Wallace explained, "and he wanted them to be celebrated all across British Columbia."¹⁰³

To allow all BC communities to celebrate, the Committee devised a per capita grant scheme for both celebratory and memorial purposes. When the proposal was brought to the premier, many of his financial advisors dismissed the scheme, but he overruled their objections and gave the per capita plan his blessing and the go-ahead.¹⁰⁴ Provided communities raised an equivalent amount of money, the province would match them \$1 per capita - forty cents to help them celebrate and cover other costs, and sixty cents to go towards lasting memorial projects.¹⁰⁵ The projects arising from this per capita scheme became important lasting markers of the celebrations, and the federal government later adopted the same scheme for 1967. All told, 344 memorial projects were built in the province, including such developments as a pavilion and park

¹⁰² *The Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee*, 329.

¹⁰³ L.J. Wallace, personal interview, 23 January 2003.

¹⁰⁴ BCA, PABCIC, T3835, 4-2, 2 – 4, transcript, L.J. Wallace interviewed by Derek Reimer, 23 April 1981.

¹⁰⁵ *The Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee*, 329.

development in Burnaby, a grandstand at the exhibition grounds in Dawson Creek, and a community hall in Slocan.¹⁰⁶

In order for communities to access these funds, the Central Committee required that they have a local centennial committee to liaise with it. In organized communities – towns and cities – the elected municipal government would appoint a centennial committee. In unincorporated areas, Community Programs Branch representatives would go out to the community, call and advertise a meeting, and have citizens elect a local centennial committee.¹⁰⁷

Finally, another forty percent of the three million dollars was spent on providing traveling displays and shows to residents of far-flung regions who might not otherwise enjoy such popular entertainment. The expense of the 1958 centennial is a testament to the government's desire that the celebrations be provincial in scope and on a scale that British Columbians had never seen before. In a guide produced for community planning the Committee described the celebrations as something akin to a Hollywood movie: "the Centenary has been properly billed as a gigantic production with a cast of 1,500,000, a stage of 360,000 square miles and thousands of beautiful natural settings in glorious BC-Colour and Super-Centennial-Scope. Fit your celebrations into this picture. Give every man, woman and child a part to play and watch British Columbia burst its seams!"¹⁰⁸

The Centennial Committee's board of directors also oversaw a network of subcommittees charged with recommending how it should proceed with various aspects

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 287-307. Several communities used their funds on a few smaller projects, rather than one large one.

¹⁰⁷ BCA, PABCIC, T3835, 4-1, 17, transcript, L.J. Wallace interviewed by Derek Reimer, 23 April 1981.

¹⁰⁸ British Columbia Centennial Committee, *A Guide to Community Organization of the British Columbia Centennial Celebrations* (1956), 14.

of the celebrations. The chairmen of these subcommittees along with the Board of Directors formed the general Centennial Committee. The seventeen subcommittees covered the Armed Forces, sports, community activities, culture, education, ethnic groups, fairs and exhibitions, historic sites and publications, industry, intra-governmental co-ordination, labour, publicity, the Pacific National Exhibition, promotion and displays, religious activities, special guests and VIPs, and tourism promotion. For convenience, the subcommittee chairmen all resided in Vancouver, Victoria or New Westminster, but were advised to add corresponding members from different regions, as they “must be ever alert to the fact that...the celebrations must be geared to all parts of the Province.”¹⁰⁹ The Board of Directors spent an enormous amount of time and energy planning and carrying out the celebrations. For instance, it held 103 meetings between 1955 and 1958, while the general Centennial Committee met together five times.¹¹⁰

Insofar as it was a creation of the provincial government, the Centennial Committee, through the Intra-Governmental Co-ordination Subcommittee ensured that various parts of the government worked in tandem. In their report on the Jubilees, Wallace and Orr indicated that the Saskatchewan committee’s efforts were more successful, since it worked together with government departments to publicize the centennial through letterheads and the ilk. Alberta’s committee, with its looser structure, found that government ministries often duplicated its efforts.¹¹¹ Thus, this Subcommittee

¹⁰⁹ BCA, BCC ‘58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 8, file: Community Activities Subcommittee, L.J. Wallace to Lance Whittaker, 17 February 1956.

¹¹⁰ *The Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee*, 29-30. See Appendix B for the Centennial Committee’s organizational structure.

¹¹¹ BCA, BCC ‘58 Committee, GR-1448 Box 6, File: Alberta Centennial 1957, Report of Visit to Alberta’s and Saskatchewan’s Golden Jubilee Committee Offices by T.F. Orr and L.J. Wallace, 1 to 3 November 1955.

was composed of Deputy Ministers or their representatives in order to coordinate governmental activities and publications, so government would act as one to publicize the province during the centennial year.¹¹² To ensure that each ministry would work alongside the Subcommittee, the Board of Directors asked Premier Bennett to send to all Ministers and Deputy Ministers the memorandum it drafted which included the sharp reminder that the Board of Directors “of which two of the Government’s cabinet ministers are active members” would decide on the Intra-Governmental Co-ordination Subcommittee’s recommendations and, if approved, “such recommendations... may be assumed they represent the Government’s thinking.”¹¹³

As a result, during 1958 centennial reminders accompanied almost every government symbol. Centennial bunting adorned the Legislature, British Columbia House in London and almost 200 government buildings throughout the province, and centennial flags flew above all of them. Each government cheque issued, every letter and envelope sent, and all annual reports carried the centennial crest and slogan.¹¹⁴ In these ways, the work of the Centennial Committee – although a body corporate – tended to be subsumed within the workings of the government as a whole. Indeed, the Board at least once made a case that since all of their funds came from the provincial government, and since all the signing officers on the Board were either cabinet ministers or civil servants, “that the British Columbia Centennial Committee should be considered in effect, a

¹¹² BCA, BCC ‘58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 9 File C/I/2, Final Report of the Intra-Governmental Co-ordination Sub-Committee, 8 October 1958.

¹¹³ BCA, BC Premier’s Records, GR-1414, Box 41, file: BC Centenary Planning Committee, L.J. Wallace to R. Worley, 24 July 1956.

¹¹⁴ BCA, BCC ‘58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 9 File C/I/2, Final Report of the Intra-Governmental Co-ordination Sub-Committee, 8 October 1958.

temporary department of the Provincial Government established for the sole purpose of the Provincial Centennial Celebrations.”¹¹⁵

The formula for carrying out the centenary in '58 proved to be so successful that the basic structure hardly changed for the following centennials. In the final report for the 1971 centenary, the committee admitted that “in a sense, work toward Centennial '71 began in the summer of 1955 with the establishment of the organization to prepare for the 1958 Centennial celebration.”¹¹⁶ From eight persons in 1958, the Board of Directors was expanded to ten in 1966-67 and '71, but five core members - Wallace, Orr, Williston, Kiernan and Ireland - remained on the Board throughout. Likewise some subcommittee directors returned to their positions for each centennial. For instance, F.P. Bernard, chairman for the Community Activities and Promotions Subcommittee, incredulously exclaimed in 1970, “This is my fourth time at the same job – I worked for the centennial in 1958, 1966 and 1967. Who has ever worked on four Centennials?”¹¹⁷ Other subcommittee chairmen joined the Board or accepted honorary positions in succeeding Centennials. Such continuity in membership institutionalized the working of the committee and, as will be argued in chapters Five and Six, left the committee reeling when BC underwent demographic and ideological shifts. The number of subcommittees increased after 1958 to reflect these changes; the most notable additions were the Women’s Activities and Native Indian Participation subcommittees, and an attempt to

¹¹⁵ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 10, file A/C/9 L.J, Wallace to A.F. Dunlop, Department of National Revenue Customs and Excise, undated, emphasis added.

¹¹⁶ British Columbia Centennial '71 Committee, *Celebration of the Century 1871-1971*. (1972) 1.

¹¹⁷ BCA, British Columbia, Centennial '71 Committee (hereafter BCC '71 Committee), GR-1450, Box 7, File A/C/1/55, F.P. Bernard to E.P. Seymour, 20 April 1970.

include a Youth Subcommittee in 1971. The cases of the two latter subcommittees will be discussed in later chapters.

Because the basic structure of the centennials had been in place since the mid 1950s, organizers and commentators had legitimate concerns that the later celebrations lacked the sparkle and sincerity of the first one. Commenting on the 1966 centennial one columnist noted, “the wheels turn smoothly, but inevitably some of the zip is gone on the second and third time around.”¹¹⁸ Committee members were hard pressed to come up with fresh projects that could be provincial in nature. Therefore, the committee repeated some of the more successful touring projects. Decoration of buildings, recognition of pioneers, totem pole projects, gigantic birthday cakes, historical pageants and centennial days of prayer all had encores.

While much remained the same, the last two centennials received quite a different reception than in 1958. The combination of BC’s 1966 centenary with the National centenary in 1967 for two years of celebration evoked puzzled responses and charges that British Columbia was attempting to upstage the national centennial. One BC editorial stated, “if the national centennial idea was intended to stir the populace into some form of national thinking – well and good – but when a province steps in and complicates the centennial idea – that is not so good. British Columbia had a centennial not so many years ago.”¹¹⁹ The juxtaposition of the two centennials –one provincial and one national – was not an easy fit, but as suggested elsewhere in this chapter, the provincial centennials were not simply about commemoration. The press was sensitive to the fact

¹¹⁸ *Vancouver Province*, 22 September 1966.

¹¹⁹ *Coast News* (Gibsons), 3 November 1966.

that these two celebratory years lacked focus¹²⁰ and followed up on criticism that the BC part of the centennial was being given more emphasis. When asked about this, Wallace said “we regard 1966 as a springboard into the 1967 Confederation centennial celebration. Both will be large years but 1967 will be bigger naturally because it is a national celebration and that has been the attitude of our committee all along.”¹²¹ The provincial government had a harder time deflecting accusations that it put the province above the nation when it sent a lackluster display to Expo '67 and chose 1967 as the year to host an international trade fair. The *Victoria Times* illustrated this well in a cartoon of Canada's Confederation Train labouring up a hill as a result of an extra car snuck on the back bearing the slogan “visit BC in '67.”¹²²

Celebration “burn-out” was a significant challenge to the 1971 centennial, as was a changing demography and social ethic in the province, which Chapter Six will explain. The Committee felt so much apathy to the plans for 1971 that it admitted “there were those who argued that a fourth year of Centennial Celebrations in a fourteen year period was excessive.”¹²³ Such apathy and disdain about the '71 centennial drowned out the historical significance. One suggestion for the centenary (put into the ‘projects rejected’ file) sums up much of this feeling:

We have had a confusing progression of centennials since 1958...the national centenary 1967 saw such low caliber effort in much of British

¹²⁰ *Vancouver Province*, 22 September 1966.

¹²¹ *Victoria Daily Times*, 15 December 1965. The group who made the accusation was the Greater Victoria Inter-municipal committee.

¹²² *Victoria Times*, 18 February 1967.

¹²³ British Columbia Centennial '71 Committee, *The Celebration of the Century 1871-1971: The Report of the British Columbia Centennial '71 Committee* (Victoria BC, 1973), 1.

Columbia and elsewhere that the BC show will need a new luster, idea additives to lift the effort enough to make it worthwhile.

The Vancouver contribution to 1967 was so feeble that street reaction to a '71 BC centennial is "What's this one for?" or "Why?"

Yet to plug along doing something just because it is a centenary [sic], which calls for doing something, isn't good enough. Let's make something out of this one.¹²⁴

This excerpt indicates the author's nostalgia for the innovation and enthusiasm that heralded BC's first centenary. While he still had faith in the organizational machinery of the committee, he no longer had faith in its motivations.

This chapter has argued that British Columbia's centennials were instrumental to the project of province building; indeed, they were necessary in lauding the province's achievements and accustoming citizens to its new material wealth. Furthermore, the celebrations themselves became a mechanism for fostering new state interests such as culture and heritage. The government could not leave such an important enterprise to chance. Therefore meticulous preparation and planning went into the centenaries themselves and its organizing committee. Building on the successes of Saskatchewan's Jubilee, the government set up an arm's length committee, but to ensure its compliance with Social Credit visions, it was largely government-staffed and fully government-funded. The structure of the Committee (with its seventeen subcommittees) also spoke to the province's desire for many interest groups to participate; and the inclusion of regional corresponding members spoke to the provincial premise of these celebrations. Despite

¹²⁴ BCA, BCC '71 Committee, GR-1450, Box 24, file P/P/7, Robert Ludwig to L.J. Wallace, 27 October 1969.

government ambivalence about the exact date of BC's origins, the centenaries had an important place in the political culture of W.A.C. Bennett's government.

Chapter Two: New “Gold Rushes”: The Promotion of Industry and Tourism in BC’s Centennial Celebrations

Any sizable state-sponsored regional, national, or international event comes with the expectation of wealth generation and tourist revenue. At the time of this writing, British Columbia is planning for the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver/Whistler. At the outset, the poor economic climate and hostility toward the present BC Liberal government emboldened Olympic critics while proponents looked forward to job creation in construction, transportation, hospitality and retail services. Not only that, but proponents also anticipate that the tens of thousands of visitors to Vancouver and surrounding areas during the games will kick start the tourist industry perceived to be on a wane since Expo 1986. These concerns are so prevalent in public discourse that very little attention has been paid to the non-material aspects of the Winter Olympics. The games in BC are seen, first and foremost, as an economic generator.¹

British Columbia’s three state-sponsored centennials in 1958, 1966/67, and 1971 were not so clear-cut. Organizers had to reconcile their purposes as internal parties for BC’s citizens to unify and celebrate the province with the economic imperatives of attracting international business and tourism. The three centenaries gave the Social Credit government a very public opportunity to impart to outsiders that all regions of the province were fit for further industrial expansion, thereby nurturing a new provincial focus for development. And through the centennials, it aimed to posit tourism as another sector in which the whole province could move forward. Further, the centennials provided an opportunity to build small BC business - its support base. In this way the

¹ *Vancouver Sun*, 2 September 2002, *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 30 December 2002, *Victoria Times-Colonist*, 3 July 2003.

centenaries, like the other provincial infrastructure built during these years, allowed the Bennett government to develop the state in the interests of free enterprise. The government, and its Centennial Committee, quickly realized that all its effort in selling British Columbia to outsiders could be directed to insiders as well. The Committees' industrial fairs and caravans were open for the public to marvel at. In addition, the government encouraged British Columbians to travel to other regions in the province, thereby overcoming their regionalism.

This pattern was set with the 1958 centennial. The Committee's guide to community planning suggested that "while the centenary is primarily a time of evaluation and appreciation of the past, we shall lose much if we neglect to draw attention to the present thriving economy of the province and to project that growth into the foreseeable future. Industrial exhibits, 'open house' periods, industry-school cooperation – all fit naturally into any successful centennial picture."² To achieve the latter goal, the Board of Directors of the Centennial Committee created an Industrial Progress Subcommittee to work on this very angle. In its final report, this subcommittee boldly stated, "the BC Centenary might itself be classified as big business," echoing government sentiments.³

In 1956, the Centennial Committee appointed representatives of primary and secondary industry from both large operations and small firms to the Industrial Progress Subcommittee.⁴ When a citizen questioned the relationship between the provincial

² British Columbia Centennial Committee, *A Guide to Community Organization of the British Columbia Centennial Celebrations* (1956), 18.

³ British Columbia Archives (hereafter BCA), British Columbia, Centennial '58 Committee (hereafter BCC '58 Committee), GR-1448, Box 16, file: Industrial Caravan, Industrial Progress Subcommittee Final Report, undated.

⁴ *News Herald*, 19 November 1956. This formula for representation on the subcommittee worked, and was reproduced for the following centenaries. BCA, Canadian

government and private industry, L.J. Wallace explained the Subcommittee desired “that industry will have its voice through this sub-committee and through the main committee.”⁵ Still, the Central Committee wanted the Subcommittee to act as a filter for private interests so that private business would not co-opt the occasion. The Alberta and Saskatchewan Golden Jubilee committees had advised them to be wary of any unauthorized promotion of the event or related business schemes. The Committee, therefore, decided that private firms wishing to sell centennial merchandise would have to seek approval in order to use the centennial logo.⁶ Most businesses complied, but when Robert Noel of the International Publishing Company published a souvenir book entitled *British Columbia Centenary 1858-1958* without authorization or the official centenary crest, the outraged Centennial Committee asked him to desist and filed a complaint with the Vancouver Better Business Bureau. Nevertheless, Noel went ahead since he did not ask to use the official centennial crest⁷ and the Committee could do little about stopping publication of this “unauthorized” book. Besides quickly producing and promoting its own centennial souvenir book, the Committee warned

the public to beware of unauthorized persons claiming to represent the British Columbia Centennial committee or the British Columbia Government. All accredited representatives of the BC Centennial Committee carry official credentials bearing the BC Centennial Crest (as

Confederation Centennial Committee (hereafter CCC Committee), GR-1449, Box 10, file: Industrial Progress Participation Subcommittee, T.L. Sturgess to L.J. Wallace, 17 March 1964.

⁵ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 9, file: Industrial Progress Subcommittee, L.J. Wallace to C.J. Hemsall, 25 May 1956.

⁶ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448 Box 6, File: Alberta Centennial 1957, Report of Visit to Alberta's and Saskatchewan's Golden Jubilee Committee Offices by T.F. Orr and L.J. Wallace, 1 to 3 November 1955.

⁷ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 3, BC Centenary Committee Minutes, 17 April 1956.

shown above). Merchants and businessmen are asked to check the name of anyone soliciting advertising in the name of the British Columbia Centennial Committee with their local centennial committee or with reputable business organizations in their area. Publishers of the official British Columbia Centennial Record Book are Evergreen Press Limited, Vancouver, BC. There are no others.⁸

Despite assuring business that they were a welcome factor in the centenary the Committee clearly did not want entrepreneurs to upstage or outsell its own efforts. After this debacle, to stop other entrepreneurs from sabotaging the official Centennial Committee, Premier Bennett himself introduced an amendment to the Centennial Act to outlaw and fine any promotions not authorized by the Central Committee or any persons misrepresenting themselves in relation to the celebrations.⁹ Its Public Information Director even pointed out that “if the board really wants to have these things used in the way they should,” it should “push the approved plans” by hiring a full-time salesman of centennial-related merchandise as the only way to counter exploiters of the centennial.¹⁰

This was an early lesson for the government’s Centennial Committee. The populist nature of both the centennial and its government sponsor necessitated a part for business and entrepreneurs; but henceforth the Committee had to ensure their participation would complement, not compete with, government interests. Instead of waiting for another incident like that of the *British Columbia Centenary 1858-1958* the committee actively forged partnerships with business and industry. In 1957, for example,

⁸ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 11, file: Newspaper-Advertising, form Letter by L.H. McCance, 30 November 1956.

⁹ *Vancouver Sun*, 18 February 1957.

¹⁰ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 8, file: Community Activities Subcommittee, L. Whitaker to L.J. Wallace, 30 April 1957.

Premier Bennett, the honorary chairman of the Centennial Committee, asked heads of large organizations, department and chain stores, oil companies and industrial firms to include BC's centennial slogan in their advertisements, and to hold annual general meetings in BC for 1958.¹¹ Organizers in 1966 and 1967 went further as they urged local business and industry to produce special centennial labels, host plant tours, and participate in the cornerstone of the Industrial Progress Subcommittees' efforts: the British Columbia International Trade Fair (BCITF).¹²

The BC International Trade Fairs of 1958, 1961, 1964, 1967, and 1971 likely had roots in a 1955 suggestion made by Thomas Howarth, a Vancouver resident and organizer of the previous year's British Empire and Commonwealth Games (and later Director in Vancouver's centennial committee), although such an idea likely would have occurred to the government regardless. Just as the 1958 Centennial Committee was forming, Howarth suggested to Premier Bennett that holding a grand manufacturing exhibition at the Pacific National Exhibition (PNE) grounds in 1958 would be "a powerful opportunity" to publicize BC's progress "not only to British Columbians but to all Canadians and to foreign countries who can be our customers and suppliers...[and it]... could be a means of attracting still more capital investment in the Province."¹³ A few months after the initial suggestion, the *Victoria Daily Colonist* reported that the Premier was to meet with PNE officials who were prepared to help him "with any ideas

¹¹ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 8, file: Bennett, Hon W.A.C., Honorary Chairman 1957, draft letter by W.A.C. Bennett, 1957.

¹² BCA, CCC Committee, GR-1449 Box 10, file: Industrial Progress and Participation Subcommittee, document entitled Subcommittees and Responsibilities, undated and Subcommittee report to Wallace, 6 December 1967 and L.J. Wallace form letter, undated.

¹³ BCA, British Columbia, Premier's Records, 1953-1972 (hereafter BC Premier's Records), GR-1414, Box 41, file: BC Centenary Planning Committee, Tom Howarth to W.A.C. Bennett, 8 June 1955.

he might have” about a trade fair.¹⁴ So important was this project, that the government turned it over to the deputy minister of the Department of Industrial Development, Trade and Commerce, T.L. Sturgess who did advance planning with the PNE Board of Directors for the trade fair to be a centennial event even before bringing it to the Centennial Committee for approval. As the trade fair was a priority for W.A.C. Bennett – its honorary chairman – the Centennial Committee did not harbour any resentment and was receptive to having Sturgess appear before it. As one member wrote to another, “knowing Mr. Sturgess’ and the Premier’s interest, I think it would be proper to have Mr. Sturgess at our next meeting” in August 1957.¹⁵ At the meeting, Sturgess appealed for support for the fair as “a considerable attraction for the Centennial Year... the Fair might illustrate B.C. progress during the last one hundred years, and that it would be a good opportunity for Canada and foreign countries to participate in the celebrations.”¹⁶ Although it was not involved in the initial planning, the PNE wanted the Centennial Committee to underwrite the trade fair. The Committee agreed that “in view of the tremendous interest which would undoubtedly be afforded by the project...the money would be well spent in the interest of the province, even if no return on the investments of \$25,000 should return.”¹⁷ Thus, it advanced \$25,000 to the PNE and hired a full-time organizer for the fair; in return, the PNE would renovate the commercial building and prepare the site for the fair. Any profit made at the fair would be divided “fifty-fifty”

¹⁴ *Victoria Daily Colonist*, 18 September 1955, 30.

¹⁵ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 9, file: Fairs and Exhibitions Subcommittee, Alderman T.F. Orr to L.J. Wallace, 25 July 1957. It should be noted that Sturgess was also the chairman of the Tourist Promotion and Hospitality Subcommittee, but he was not acting in that capacity here.

¹⁶ BCA, BCC '58 Committee GR-1448, Box 1, BC Centenary Committee Minutes, 13 August 1957.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 22 August 1957.

between the PNE and the Committee. Immediately thereafter Robert Bonner, the Minister of Industrial Development, Trade and Commerce, announced that a trade fair would be held in May 1958 to “afford an opportunity for foreign firms and foreign countries to participate in the Centennial Celebrations” and to promote “reciprocal trade with those countries with which we are doing business.”¹⁸

This announcement set the tone for the trade fair, whose main purpose in the words of its new manager, B.W. Barnett, was to be a “vehicle for the promotion of overseas trade with B.C.” with its “first function” being “to bring together buyer and exporter.” However, he recognized that “in view of the larger considerations (centennial year, government participation etc.)” the fair would have to be a “top line attraction and that this trade fair must be “closely identified with the public.” Of course, attracting the public was a financial incentive as well. Barnett believed the fair could “attract a minimum of 300,000 paying customers, providing that additional entertainment is provided.”¹⁹ As a result, the Trade Fair committee planned elaborate fireworks programs for each of the ten nights of the fair, as well as international dancing displays and musical attractions. In addition, an advertising pamphlet boasted that visitors will see “a showplace of British Columbia’s booming economy, and a tribute to the importers and exporters who have made possible the vast increase in two-way trade during the last decade. Equally important, the International Trade Fair is an important part of the

¹⁸ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 21, file: Trade Fair, Press Release by the Hon. R.W. Bonner, 26 August 1957.

¹⁹ City of Vancouver Archives (hereafter CVA), Vancouver Board of Trade (hereafter VBT), BC International Trade Fair. MSS 300, file 7, Bruce W. Barnett to Mr. Noble, Chairman BC International Trade Fair Committee, 5 November 1957.

celebrations marking the first exciting century of British Columbia's history."²⁰ On the exhibition floor, visitors would experience evidence of BC's "good life" firsthand.

Drawing people to industrial fairs with entertainment was not unusual among fair promoters. For example, from 1879 to 1903, the Toronto International Exhibition lured visitors to its fair with popular entertainments. Once there, the middle class directors and exhibitors tried to maintain hegemony and influence over taste through spatial organization and display to give visitors confidence in the new phenomenon of urbanization and consumption.²¹ Similarly, the BCITF and the other projects of the Industrial Progress Subcommittee were meant to inculcate industry-oriented values amongst spectators. Furthermore, through staging a successful centennial year, particularly attracting international visitors to the BCITF and Vancouver, British Columbia would show itself capable of hosting world-class events, and help chart an expansive future.

For its first international trade fair, the Committee attracted 120 exhibitors from over twenty countries, and invited over 15,000 buyers from all across Canada. Exhibitors and visitors were introduced to displays of apparel, household appliances, camping supplies, metal such as aluminum and stainless steel, aircraft and vehicles.²² Despite its success in bringing together buyer and manufacturer, reinforcing the importance of international business for BC, and surpassing expectations for attendance, the fair was a financial failure. Its expenses were higher than anticipated, and the Centennial

²⁰ Ibid., "British Columbia International Trade Fair" pamphlet.

²¹ Keith Walden, *Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a late Victorian Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

²² BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 21, file: Trade Fair, Report of the BCITF Committee, undated.

Committee ended up with a \$20,000 debt. In justifying the loss, Barnett underscored the competing aims of the trade fair - developing “the industrial potential and wealth of the province,” while attracting paying customers. Therefore, “the show had to be a trade fair of international standing, but to pay for itself it had to be a public show interesting enough to attract 100,000 people.”²³ Despite the loss, tourist officials lauded the trade fair for bringing worldwide attention to the Province, and introducing Vancouver as a city capable of hosting a world-class event. The president of the Greater Vancouver Tourist Association was exuberant about its possibilities. “This is the kind of standard which seems now to have the appeal which draws the crowds, as evidenced by the successes of similar ventures in the United States and other parts of the world. From a tourist point of view, and as a feature of British Columbia’s centennial year, your efforts have been a wonderful success.”²⁴

Like other centennial ventures discussed in the previous chapter, the fair was also elevated to a regular government mandate. The department of Industrial Development, Trade and Commerce continued to host a BCITF at three-year intervals with the same objective of making “it possible for the nations trading with Canada to exhibit their goods and services in one of the world’s most important markets.”²⁵ However, reflecting the need to attract local attendees and to keep industrial progress visible to the public, the

²³ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee GR-1448, Box 21, file: Trade Fair, Report to British Columbia International Trade Fair Committee by Bruce Barnett, undated.

²⁴ BCA, BC Premier’s Records, GR-1414, Box 42, file: Premier, T.B. Haskell to R.D. Noble, 13 May 1958.

²⁵ *BCITF Newsletter*, October 1959.

trade fair planned a fashion show for the “feminine visitors to the BCITF,” a car rally, and ethnic dancers.²⁶

The 1967 trade fair coincided with Canada’s centennial year. As in 1958, the 1966-67 Centennial Committee contributed financial support as a part of the wider celebrations although the fair’s format and objectives were still to bring manufacturers and buyers together. But organizers urged exhibitors to celebrate Canada’s Centenary and to draw a comparison between present and past by making the fair “a showplace for the latest, most up-to-date products in the world, but with its centennial theme it will also feature the old, the quaint and the out of date.” Thus, the fair invited exhibitors to add “antiques or replicas of early products to their displays.”²⁷

In inviting manufacturers to participate in the 1967 fair, Premier Bennett reminded them of the progress BC had made since Canada’s founding. “This is the British Columbia of today,” he wrote, “and in its burgeoning economy is seen the great promise of its future – a continuation and acceleration of a phenomenal industrial development in which you, as a progressive businessman, are invited to participate.”²⁸ Such promotion was particularly important to the 1967 BCITF, as it was going head-to-head with Montreal’s Expo ’67. The government could have scheduled the fair for another year, as it did for 1971’s fair, but it did not alter the three-year rotation because it hoped to capitalize on the number of foreign visitors expected to come to Canada’s centennial. Further, Bennett was more experienced, self-assured and optimistic. By the mid-1960s, the BC government had made strides in road construction, had nationalized the BC

²⁶ Ibid., October 1960 and March 1961.

²⁷ Ibid., October 1966.

²⁸ British Columbia, Department of Industrial Development, Trade and Commerce. *Invitation to Industry*, (1967), i.

Electric, had brokered an international treaty to sell excess power from the Columbia River, and was already developing the hydro-electric potential of the Peace River.²⁹ The BCITF was a cog in the wheel to further develop BC's industrial capacities; as such it was to go ahead. However, the BCITF itself acknowledged the challenges Montreal's Expo '67 presented to the success of the BC fair:

Since EXPO 67 is... probably the most comprehensive promotion and publicity program ever originated in Canada, the need for an immediate start of BCITF's promotion program cannot be over-emphasized. While co-operation between EXPO 67 and BCITF is a reasonable expectation in many matters, the two functions are presently competing for the exhibitors' dollar. For this reason publicity along with provincial government activity, direct sales effort and advertising will be required to be undertaken on a scale much beyond that which has been necessary to make previous BCITF events successful.³⁰

The government's decision to carry on with the fair prompted the media to accuse it of privileging BC over Canada in its Centennial year, and thereby worsening relations between the two levels of government.³¹ This was particularly so because BC's exhibit at Expo '67 was lackluster at best. All the government's efforts went into its own fair so it did not even enter a separate exhibit at Expo. Instead BC joined the three other Western provinces in a modest combined effort.³² Publicly, officials denied that there was any

²⁹ David Mitchell, *W.A.C. Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1983), 312.

³⁰ CVA, VBT, BCITF, MSS 300, file 7, General Manager's Report and Recommendations – 1967 B.C.I.T.F., undated.

³¹ *Victoria Colonist*, 11 June 1965, *Victoria Daily Times*, 5 and 22 August 1964.

³² Simon Fraser University Archives (hereafter SFU), W.A.C. Bennett Fonds, F55-34-0-6, Canada's Centenary, file: letters 1959-1967, Premier Duff Roblin to W.A.C. Bennett, 3 September 1964.

competition between the two fairs; Minister of Industry, Ralph Loffmark, stressed that the two fairs were radically different and seeking a different clientele.³³ This fair was successful as a venue to bring together importers and exporters, but had a disappointing level of public attendance, although it is unclear whether locals or visitors stayed away. In any case, the BCITF acknowledged that in the future there should be a greater emphasis on consumer goods and pleasant sit-down restaurant services in order to attract the public.³⁴

The fifth BC International Trade Fair was also planned for a centennial year. The government broke from the three-year cycle, which would have placed it in 1970, to coincide with 1971's centennial of joining confederation. Bennett, true to form, proclaimed it would be "the biggest ever held in Canada."³⁵ To drum up enthusiasm for another trade fair, the organizers opted for a fresh approach. First a name change. While the organizing committee still operated under the BCITF, it created a catchy shortened name for the fair – "ImpoExpo 71," harkening back to its competition in '67. This new approach came along with a new symbol - two intertwined circles with arrows pointing in opposite directions at each end to represent "the flow of trade to and from British Columbia – imports from overseas and continental suppliers and exports to world-wide customers. The basic motif reflects in its simplest form the two way trade that is the economic sinew of all trading nations."³⁶ ImpoExpo 71 could also boast of being the "first 'computerized' trade fair ever held in North America." In cooperation with

³³ *Vancouver Sun*, 30 May 1966, A7.

³⁴ CVA, Vancouver Board of Trade, BCITF. MSS 300, file 7, General Manager's Report and Recommendations – 1967 BCTIF, undated.

³⁵ *Vancouver Province*, 11 December 1969.

³⁶ *ImpoExpo 71 Newsletter*, November 1969.

supplier Univac, a supercomputer helped with the administration of the fair, by managing inventory, holding mailing lists and such matters. More importantly, during the fair's ten day run, terminals would allow exhibitors, investors and the general public access to the information with the stroke of a keyboard operated by a specially-trained Univac assistant.³⁷ In promoting the fair, the Board of Directors from the BCITF again sought close cooperation with the BC Centennial Committee, aiming to become "the outstanding trade promotion event of B.C.'s Centennial Year, 1971."³⁸ The BCITF Board of Directors tried to have L.J. Wallace schedule as many VIPs as he could to coincide with the opening of the fair.³⁹

The BC International Trade Fair was an important venture for the provincial government to welcome industry to further the post-war boom. As a centennial event, it legitimized to its citizens the new aggressive direction the government wanted to take British Columbia industry. Although the fair became something of its own after 1958, when possible, organizers tied it to a centennial. Those which occurred in centennial years, no longer had to invest so much in finding a centennial connection because they were taken for granted as part of a new industrial BC.

What of British Columbians outside the lower mainland who could not attend the trade fair in 1958? The government and Committee wanted the support and promotion of industry during the centenary to have a provincial reach. The solution, for the members of the Industrial Progress Subcommittee, was to take the show on the road. As early as

³⁷ Ibid., October 1970.

³⁸ CVA, VBT, British Columbia International Trade Fair, MSS 300, file 1, Presentation for the Board of Directors' Luncheon on BCITF, 18 December 1970.

³⁹ CVA, VBT, British Columbia International Trade Fair, MSS 300, file 8, British Columbia International Trade Fair Directors minutes, 26 March 1969.

1956 they recommended “that a caravan” consisting of “high quality mobile exhibits of industrial attainment nominated by industry” make a two month long tour of the hinterland during the Centennial celebrations.⁴⁰ Because members of the Subcommittee had little experience with such a traveling exhibit, they recruited the BC Products Bureau of the Vancouver Board of Trade to co-sponsor the event. That, the Subcommittee Chairman recognized, posed problems because the Vancouver-centric nature of the board and its past shows, which “only emphasized a section of provincial industry” and had difficulty working out “something that would be all inclusive.”⁴¹ The Subcommittee was anxious to make all British Columbians “more fully aware of our growing greatness as an Industrial Province.”⁴² To draw the highest possible attendance, the caravan’s visits to interior points were timed to coincide with local celebrations and fairs. And to paint a “complete picture” of BC industry which included small business, caravan organizers sought products from small manufacturers at the main stopping places of Quesnel, Prince George, Dawson Creek, Trail, Cranbrook, Chilliwack, Mission and Courtenay.⁴³ In the end, the caravan highlighted BC’s main primary industries of fishing, agriculture, mining, forestry and energy, as well as smaller displays of thirty-five secondary-manufactured goods.⁴⁴ More than the BCITF, the caravan reinforced populism. The caravan reassured

⁴⁰ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 16, file: Industrial Caravan, Industrial Progress Subcommittee minutes, 25 October 1956.

⁴¹ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 9, file: Industrial Progress Subcommittee, A.M. James to L.J. Wallace, 3 December 1957.

⁴² BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 16, file: Industrial Caravan, document entitled Industrial Progress, undated.

⁴³ British Columbia Centennial Committee, *The Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee* (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1959), 139; BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 16, file: Industrial Caravan, document entitled Industrial Progress, undated, and Industrial Progress Sub-Committee minutes, 16 November 1956.

⁴⁴ *The Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee*, 139.

small business that they still held an important position in BC industry despite the courting of international business through the BCITF. Further, it demonstrated that prosperity was widespread and each region had an industry-rich future.

The Premier and the Committee also saw the centennials as an opportunity to promote a less resource-intensive industry - tourism. Faith in the tourist industry was widespread throughout North America and Europe in the post-war years, and British Columbia was no exception. Though a trend towards tourism for the masses, not just the wealthy, had been developing since the early twentieth century, holidaying was becoming an even more accessible facet of life in the buoyant post-war economy. With the increasing use of the automobile in the 1920s and 1930s, auto courts and parks had emerged to serve a new class of consumers for whom both governments and private enterprise catered. The Second World War was only a temporary setback to tourism.⁴⁵ After the war, Canadian officials expended much effort into the tourist industry. The creation of the Canadian Government Travel Bureau and its film division was part of the overall reconstruction plan.⁴⁶ In the early 1950s, as Canada experienced a tourist deficit – losing more vacationing Canadians over the border than those Americans coming in – the federal government and provincial governments (such as that of Ontario) urged citizens to exaggerate their reputation for friendliness as a strategy to encourage US tourists to stay longer and to draw more through word-of-mouth advertising.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ See Michael Dawson, “Consumerism and the Creation of the Tourist Industry in British Columbia, 1900-1965” (Ph.D. diss, Queens University, 2001) and *Selling British Columbia: Tourism and Consumer Culture, 1890-1970* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004).

⁴⁶ Alisa Apostle, “The Display of a Tourist Nation: Canada in Government Film, 1945-1959,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 12 (2001), 181.

⁴⁷ Ibid., and Karen Dubinsky, “‘Everybody Likes Canadians’: Canadians, Americans and the Post World War II Travel Boom,” in *Being Elsewhere: Tourism, Consumer Culture*

The prospect of more tourist dollars in BC was another impetus for staging elaborate internationally billed celebrations. At a 1957 luncheon of the Vancouver Board of Trade, Larry McCance, the '58 Centennial Executive Secretary explicitly referred to the celebration's potential to spark industrial and tourist development, "British Columbia in 1958 will be alive with interesting features, not only for British Columbians, but for tourists as well. The event may someday be referred to as the Gold Rush of 1958."⁴⁸

Despite the faith put into the centennial's ability to spark a tourist boom, the importance of these events in tourism development and promotion in BC has gone unstudied. In his study of the use of language and rhetoric in tourist promotion and advertising on BC's landscape and cultural geography, Ronald Ross Nelson focuses on the periods of 1900 to 1940, and 1975 to 1990, claiming that these "were and continue to be particularly important in the growth and evolution of tourism in British Columbia."⁴⁹ However, in many small and large ways, Nelson takes for granted the W.A.C. Bennett years as laying the foundation of the tourism boom post-1975, but gives little detail or explanation for that foundation.⁵⁰ Michael Dawson's book *Selling British Columbia:*

and Identity in Modern Europe and North America, eds. Shelley Baranowki and Ellen Furlough (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001).

⁴⁸ CVA, Harold Merilees Fonds, MSS 425, Volume 2, file 1, Speech for Luncheon Meeting of Advertising and Sales Bureau, Vancouver Board of Trade by Larry McCance, 8 April 1957.

⁴⁹ Ronald Ross Nelson, "The Presentation of Landscape: Rhetorical Conventions and the Promotion of Tourism in British Columbia, 1900-1990" (Ph.D. diss, UBC, 1994), 5.

⁵⁰ For instance, Nelson writes "tourist revenues had actually increased quite slowly during the 1950s, rising approximately ten percent in constant dollars between 1951 and 1961. Over the next decade, however tourist revenues more than tripled, reaching an estimated half billion dollars in 1971," (244), but does not offer an explanation for the increase.

Tourism and Consumer Culture, 1890-1970 also neglects the importance of the centenaries.⁵¹

The remainder of this chapter will focus on the work the government, the Centennial Committee, and private interests did to ensure the tourism sparked by the celebrations would become an important area of growth alongside BC's traditional industries. However, tourists also came to see and do things. Later chapters will explore the discursive elements of events designed to draw in tourists and residents alike.

The 1958 Centennial Committee charged the Tourist Promotion and Hospitality Subcommittee with elevating the centennials to a bona fide tourist attraction, or as the Subcommittee clarified at its first meeting, "to advertise and promote the Centennial outside of the Province in order to bring in the greatest numbers of tourists."⁵² Bringing in tourist dollars to all parts of the province would help justify the expense of the centennial.⁵³ Furthermore, the centenary went hand-in-hand with a wider provincial effort to expand BC's tourist industry in the post-war years. Before 1958, most people thought the upcoming centennial would be a one-time event, of which the tourist industry could capitalize on in the years afterwards as word-of-mouth about the tourist offerings of the province spread.⁵⁴ Therefore, organizers orchestrated tourist publicity to "be carefully geared to augment and strengthen the continuing efforts of the Government

⁵¹ Dawson, *Selling British Columbia*. See the introduction in this dissertation for a fuller discussion.

⁵² BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 9, file: Tourist Promotion and Hospitality Subcommittee, Tourist Promotion and Hospitality Sub-Committee minutes, 5 April 1956.

⁵³ CVA, Harold Merilees Fonds, MSS 426, file: BC Centennial 1958, Untitled document 29 May 1958.

⁵⁴ *Vancouver Sun*, 13 August 1958.

Tourist Bureau which through the years has been charged with the responsibility for provincial advertising abroad.”⁵⁵

Perhaps more than any other industry, the centenaries were particularly directed towards strengthening tourism. In an interview after his tenure as premier, W.A.C. Bennett claimed it was always his government’s intention to develop BC’s tourism industry so it exceeded revenues from forestry, mining or any other sector. He reasoned that “in the tourist business you don’t sell the steak, you sell the sizzle. People come and look at it, and they go away, and they take nothing away, but leave nothing but money. The best business in the world is the tourist business. That was part of the reason for building those highways and so forth.”⁵⁶ Likewise, reflecting on the millions of visitors who saw BC during these celebrations, longtime cabinet minister Wesley Black noted that the tourist dollar is “the absolute best dollar. Simply because...there’s no sharing of anything. It’s completely free for the use of the province.”⁵⁷

The Tourist Promotion and Hospitality Subcommittee took its task of raising tourist revenues in 1958 seriously; especially since its chairman, T.L. Sturgess, the Deputy Minister of Industrial Development, Trade and Commerce, was also responsible for the tourism industry until 1957 when tourism was transferred to the Department of Recreation and Conservation. The Subcommittee even wanted to recast the official slogan of “1858-1958, A Century to Celebrate” to be more of a summons for tourists to

⁵⁵ CVA, Harold Merilees Fonds, MSS 425, Volume 2, file 1, Speech for Luncheon Meeting of Advertising and Sales Bureau, Vancouver Board of Trade by Larry McCance, 8 April 1957.

⁵⁶ SFU, David Mitchell Fonds, F56-1-0-61, Transcript, W.A.C. Bennett interviewed by David Mitchell, 1977.

⁵⁷ Ibid., F56-3-0-3, Transcript, Wesley Black interview by David Mitchell, 1977-1978.

visit. It suggested, “Let’s all celebrate,” or “Come and Help us Celebrate.”⁵⁸ Echoing the links the Industrial Progress Subcommittee forged with industry, this subcommittee also established connections with private business as to how to jointly exploit the centennial for tourism promotion. At a 1956 conference sponsored by the Vancouver Board of Trade, Sturgess spoke on “BC’s Centennial as a Tourist Attraction.” The reactions of his audience again revealed the contradictions implicit in staging a commemorative celebration for insiders while simultaneously attracting outsiders. Members of the Board of Trade suggested that rather than each small community setting up its own celebrations with little regard to the schedules of its neighbours, communities combine forces and stage joint activities and celebrations over a matter of days to concentrate tourists for the benefit of local business and tourist operators.⁵⁹ The government, however, had already decided that communities should have considerable leeway in planning and carrying out their own celebrations.⁶⁰ Although it could not control the timing of individual community celebrations the sheer number of events that took place in BC in 1958 allowed the Committee to boast that tourists would “have a once-in-a-hundred-years chance to see BC at its most sparkling, colourful best.”⁶¹

Expectations for the centenary to draw many tourists to the province were high. The 1958 Centennial Committee anticipated a twenty percent rise in visitor numbers in 1958 as compared to 1957.⁶² Private tourism operators were eager to capitalize on what

⁵⁸ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 9, file: Tourist Promotion and Hospitality Subcommittee, Tourist Promotion and Hospitality Sub-Committee minutes, 23 May 1956.

⁵⁹ Ibid., T.L. Sturgess to L.J. Wallace, 27 April 1956.

⁶⁰ See Chapter Three.

⁶¹ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 11, file: Magazines, D.J. Horan, publicity director, to Duke Perkins, Vacationland Magazine, 17 May 1957.

⁶² Ibid.

the state-sponsored celebrations promised, especially in Vancouver, the self-pronounced “gateway” to BC’s centennial celebrations. The Vancouver centennial committee aimed to build partnerships with businesses, reminding them that out of the estimated three million visitors expected in BC in 1958, bringing \$150 million tourist dollars, “by far the greatest number of our guests will see Vancouver before they see the rest of BC. That’s why the Vancouver Centennial Committee has gone to great lengths to ensure that their first impressions are good ones, that there will be plenty in Vancouver to keep them entertained during their stay here.”⁶³ As the provincial government and city council were making the major investments to attract tourists, the mayor and the local centennial committee suggested that the business community “as a matter of civic responsibility and in self-interest” contribute \$100,000 to put on local events.⁶⁴ The centennial promised such a windfall the business community did not have to be cajoled to assist. As its own centennial project, the Downtown Business Association spearheaded creating a twenty-mile tourist route passing through the city to guide tourists to historic and cultural sites with totem pole route markers. Merchants, of course, expected that tourists were also shoppers.⁶⁵

Since tourist numbers rose in the years following the first centenary,⁶⁶ organizers of the two later centennials expected the same bonanzas. During planning for the 1971 centennial, officials expected ten million visitors and over \$520 million to flood into the

⁶³ CVA, British Columbia Centennial Committee, MSS 178, volume 1, file: Publications 1956-1958, Vancouver Centennial News newsletter, undated.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 24, file: Vancouver, News Release by Vancouver Centennial Committee, 1 June 1958.

⁶⁶ The value of tourism in BC increased from 106,000,000 in 1958 to 227,850,000 in 1966. Province of British Columbia, *Report of the Department of Recreation and Conservation*, (1962 and 1966).

province, thus, private interests encouraged the role state-sponsored celebrations played in the industry. One tourist operator noted, “the BC government spends a great deal of money to promote BC as a destination point, but its responsibility ends here. It is then up to private enterprise to step in and look after the needs of visitors.”⁶⁷

Despite their enthusiasm for centennial tourist dollars, tourism operators would begrudge the government any obstacles in their delivery. Eager to capitalize on the need for visitors to find accommodations during the centennial year, operators were aghast to find that rumors about BC’s lack of accommodation were circulating amongst tourists. The President of the Auto Courts and Resorts Association of British Columbia reported to the Committee that during the British Empire Games in 1954 and the Grey Cup game in 1955, visitors gained the impression that accommodation was limited and expensive in Vancouver and the rest of BC. He warned the Committee, “now it appears that BC’s greatest effort, the Centennial is already beginning to be sabotaged by rumourous chatter such as ‘B.C.-the place to STAY AWAY FROM in 1958’.” Fearing these rumours would be hard to dispel, he urged the Committee to start advanced promotion that BC had good and clean accommodations, to stop the “sabotage” which would rob tourist operators of “some of the lucrative tourist trade.”⁶⁸ As a result, the Committee did what it could to ensure the unimpeded flow of tourists. Realizing that local centennial committees could be the front line of the 1958 tourist year it urged them to set up “hospitality committees” to survey tourist facilities in their areas, and “direct visitors to the best places to stay, eat and entertain themselves and to places local historic, scenic or

⁶⁷ *BC Business Journal*, August 1971.

⁶⁸ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 9, file: Tourism Promotion and Hospitality Subcommittee, Joseph J. DiMarzo to Chairman and Board, BC Centennial Committee, 6 September 1956.

other interest.”⁶⁹ To solve the problems of accommodation, it suggested that local committees keep registries of private residences that could take tourists after commercial establishments became full. Believing the centennial year would be the forerunner for a booming tourist industry, Wallace wanted to ensure return visitors, announcing “friendly cooperation in a matter like this will be invaluable to the success of our centennial year, and certainly will have a great effect on bringing our tourist friends back again.”⁷⁰

Private operators were also concerned that the government was not doing enough to allow tourists ease of travel to their centennial destinations. Roads and highways were essential in letting tourists and citizens alike move around the province, but highway expansion necessitated a significant amount of construction, including detours and delays. The summer of 1957 saw particularly poor road conditions in Northern BC, which Highways Minister P.A. Gaglardi blamed on poor weather. The vice-president of the Vancouver Tourist Association reported hearing more criticism about BC roads than ever before and warned that motorists from the United States “will advise friends against coming, thus cutting into the BC centennial celebrations in 1958.”⁷¹ This was not idle criticism; the condition of roads also concerned the Vancouver Board of Trade in planning the itinerary of its industrial caravan. Gaglardi was willing to do his “best to put the highway [#5] in the best possible shape so that a caravan could travel on it if it is felt to be in the best interests of everybody concerned.”⁷² Gaglardi had extra incentive since that highway ran through his own constituency of Kamloops. In the end, there is little

⁶⁹ *British Columbia Centennial Committee Newsletter*, undated.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, February 1958.

⁷¹ *Vancouver Province*, 14 August 1957.

⁷² BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 7, file: Provincial Government, P.A. Gaglardi to L.J. Wallace, 5 July 1956.

evidence that highway construction or the condition of the roads impeded tourist travel during centennial year.

A transportation issue that did foul up anticipated tourist numbers was the 1958 strikes against Black Ball and Canadian Pacific Coast Steamships, two private ferry companies that linked Vancouver Island and the Mainland. For centennial organizers, the ferry strike could not have come at the worst time – at the beginning of summer, when Vancouver Island communities were getting ready to host celebratory events and businesses were primed to welcome tourists. Within a few weeks, Nanaimo, served by the Black Ball Ferry line, realized the impact of the strike on the summertime local economy. Besides seeing sales in local shops drop, word-of-mouth among potential visitors meant that the “tourist business, not yet in its full stride, has just about petered out on Vancouver Island.”⁷³ In response to the peril facing Vancouver Island’s economy, Premier W.A.C. Bennett did something extraordinarily drastic. On 18 July 1958 he had the provincial government take over the service of the Black Ball line, since an early settlement between management and labour seemed unlikely. Although the province only maintained service for a few days before the two sides settled and continued regular service, Bennett realized the ferry link was vital to the province’s transportation system and set about to nationalize the private ferry corporations in the following year.⁷⁴

Island communities still felt a severe impact in their tourist revenues and in the success of their centenary celebrations. Island hotels, auto courts, motels and restaurants, who had heavily invested in improvements in anticipation of centennial tourists, reported that the ten week strike led to cancelled bookings and a tourist trade that did not

⁷³ *Nanaimo Daily Free Press*, 7 June 1958.

⁷⁴ Mitchell, *W.A.C. Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia*, 270-272.

materialize. The Nanaimo centennial committee also lost revenue because of poor ticket sales to its events.⁷⁵

When the centennial year of 1958 ended and the revenues from tourists were tallied, the government was disappointed to learn that despite all its efforts, revenue had only marginally increased over the previous year and it “did not reflect the benefits anticipated from centennial promotions.” The Department of Recreation and Conservation blamed poor weather in Canada as a whole, the disruption in the ferry service and the effects of increasing competition in the tourist trade where “seventy-two countries and forty-nine states and two territories compete for our market.”⁷⁶

No such calamity befell the tourist trade in the succeeding centenaries, because by then the government had taken measures to shore up its traditional market - Americans, particularly Californians. In the post-war period *tourist* and *American* came to mean the same thing for Canadian tourist operators.⁷⁷ Therefore, in the 1950s BC had already started to tailor its promotions and pattern its tourist standards to that of California, “this legal plagiarism was likely not accidental. The Bureau was well aware of the importance of the California market, and thus the value of adopting their norms.”⁷⁸

To draw in American tourists during centennial year, the BC Government Travel Bureau handed out thousands of copies of centennial literature at a 1958 Los Angeles sportsman’s show where the audience would already be predisposed to coming to the

⁷⁵ Nanaimo Community Archives (hereafter NCA), Civic Boards and Committees, 1992-011-C, Box 6, file: BC Centennial Committee: Final Report and Promotional Package, Final Report to BC Centennial Committee, undated.

⁷⁶ Province of British Columbia, *Report of the Department of Recreation and Conservation*, (1958), 45.

⁷⁷ Dubinsky, “Everybody Likes Canadians,” 326.

⁷⁸ Nelson, “The Presentation of Landscape,” 243.

province.⁷⁹ Besides maintaining a presence at such conventions, the government attempted to align itself with California's most famous industry - film and commercial production. Early in 1956 the Tourist Promotion Subcommittee considered a tourist film chronicling the historic development of the province's transportation routes including modern highways, and the wealth of outdoor recreation and sport it offered.⁸⁰ Planning yielded a 25-minute film, *The Tall Country*, used for promotion within the province and distributed nationally and internationally through the National Film Board.⁸¹

However a more direct appeal to Americans was needed. The ultimate promotion vehicle in California and the western states would, of course, be star power. And the Centennial Committee found it in actor Bing Crosby who, as an avid fisherman, was already familiar with much of British Columbia. In one 1958 TV commercial aired in the Pacific Northwest, Crosby pitched British Columbia as his idea of "the perfect vacation spot," and informed viewers that 1958 would be an even better year to visit "because British Columbia is celebrating a year-long birthday party – the BC Centennial. Everybody is invited." Following the clip of Crosby speaking, viewers were presented a montage of stereotypical scenes of British Columbia tourism: the parliament buildings, bronco busting in the Cariboo, and a highway scene. Crosby invited viewers to contact the BC Government Travel Bureau to request a free British Columbia Centennial Kit. The commercial ended with Crosby, "Send for it now, huh, and I'll be seeing you in BC

⁷⁹ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 10, file: BC Government Travel Bureau, Earnest Evans to L.J. Wallace, 18 March 1958.

⁸⁰ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 4, Tourist Promotion Subcommittee minutes, 5 April 1956.

⁸¹ *The Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee*, 178.

this year.”⁸² Crosby’s BC contacts reported to the Committee that “the idea of Crosby doing commercials has gone over very big with the people down there and has added considerably to the stature of our centennial celebrations in their eyes.”⁸³ The Central Committee was so grateful to Bing Crosby for promoting the BC centennial free of charge that it looked into memorializing his friendship to British Columbians by having a major geographic feature named after him. However, finding that he was disqualified from this honour since he was still alive, it settled for giving him a lifetime fishing and hunting license.⁸⁴

In 1958, the Committee passed up a chance for a more physical presence in the United States to advertise the celebrations. The Canadian Advertising Agency, a private marketing firm had suggested to the premier that the province put a float in the Pasadena Rose Parade. The agency’s manager admitted that the costs would be “considerable” but “the fact that the float would be seen on television by probably something over 50,000,000 people” meant “the publicity advantages would undoubtedly far outweigh any cost involved.”⁸⁵ Always ready to take advantage of a showy way to publicize British Columbia, Bennett favoured such participation provided the float was “an entry worthy of representing British Columbia.”⁸⁶ The Board of Directors, however, rejected his suggestion, perhaps due to the costs involved and the other promotional efforts that were

⁸² BCA, BC Premier’s Records, GR-1414, Box 44, file: Centennial file, Cockfield, Brown and Company Limited, 1958.

⁸³ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 24, file: Vancouver January 1/58-May 31/58, C. Bassett to D.J. Horan, 8 April 1958.

⁸⁴ Ibid., Box 3, BC Centenary Committee minutes, 6 February 1958.

⁸⁵ BCA, BC Premier’s Records, GR-1414, Box 41, file: BC Centennial Planning Committee, K.L. Johnson to W.A.C. Bennett, 26 July 1956.

⁸⁶ Ibid., R.B. Worley to R. Williston, 8 August 1956.

already underway.⁸⁷ After low tourist revenues that year, the committee would not make this mistake again.

Despite other efforts to bring in American tourists in 1958 the BCGTB determined there was only a three percent gain in border crossings.⁸⁸ The reliance on American visitors led the 1966-67 Centennial Committee to look more favourably on entering the Pasadena Rose Parade in 1966. Not only did the Centennial Committee enter a float to publicize its celebrations, it entered determined to win. It commissioned a California company to design and build the floral float carrying Miss British Columbia, an ambassador to tourism. Bennett's private publicist, William Clancey, arranged for members of the famous Royal Canadian Mounted Police Musical Ride and the BC Beefeater Band to accompany the float⁸⁹ so it would be "easily remembered" and a "sweepstake winner."⁹⁰ The premier was so excited that BC had finally entered a float, he, with other centennial officials, traveled to California the week before the parade to open the centenary year by "promoting BC's 1966 tourist industry and visit[ing] Disneyland."⁹¹ The aim of the Committee in entering the float was successful; it won the first prize in the international class. Bennett was not content to rely solely on the TV coverage to promote the centennial to Californians, so he partook in Disneyland's frontier exhibitions and presented a BC flag to Disney officials, while the BC Beefeater Band

⁸⁷ Ibid., L.J. Wallace to K.L. Johnson, 7 September 1956.

⁸⁸ *Report of the Department of Recreation and Conservation* (1959), 45.

⁸⁹ BCA, CCC Committee, GR-1449, Box 41, file: Rose Bowl, W. Clancey to Isabella Coleman, 30 June 1965 and J.R.W. Bordeleau to L.J. Wallace, undated.

⁹⁰ Ibid., W. Clancey to L.J. Wallace, 1 September 1965.

⁹¹ *Victoria Colonist*, 11 December 1965.

played and paraded up Fantasy Town's main street, and BC centennial officials handed out copies of *Beautiful British Columbia* magazines to visitors.⁹²

The time and expense of promoting BC in California met with mixed responses. Those outside of British Columbia, including John Fisher, the National Centennial Commissioner, congratulated the BC government and centennial officials for a job well done.⁹³ However, because the BC centennial of 1966 was overshadowed by the national one occurring in the next year, some were confused. "There can be no question about British Columbia being progressive, but aren't you rushing things a bit? I thought BC just had a centennial in 1958. Or is it that Premier Bennett has decided to move confederation ahead by a year?"⁹⁴ Others recognized that 1966 was another year for British Columbia to celebrate, yet they received the news of the BC promotion in California with raised eyebrows, prompting Wallace to defend the move, saying that events for 1966 and 1967 were planned not for tourists, but for Canadians – primarily British Columbians. Nevertheless, the very presence of government officials, and the entrance of a float in the Rose Bowl parade in California indicated that the Committee was banking on tourist dollars to make the centennial a success. Since the 1958 tourist business was less than stellar "one of the lessons learned from 1958 was that competition for tourist business is growing more savage every year," therefore "Pasadena is so high on the list of early centennial events."⁹⁵ The cost of the project, \$175,000, although large, was rationalized by the fact that Americans already made up a significant portion

⁹² *Vancouver Sun*, 3 January 1966.

⁹³ BCA, CCC Committee, GR-1449, Box 41, file: Rose Bowl, John Fisher to L.J. Wallace, 10 January 1966.

⁹⁴ BCA, CCC, GR-1449, Box 41, file: Rose Bowl, K.J. Williams to Wesley Black, 3 January 1966.

⁹⁵ *Vancouver Province*, 21 December 1965.

of BC's post-war tourist business and further promotion in the US should serve up more of the same.⁹⁶

The 1966 float was such a success that another float in the Pasadena Rose Bowl Parade opened the 1971 centennial, as the return was acknowledged as being "incredible" with an audience estimated at 100 million. Again, Bennett accompanied the float to California. Perhaps acknowledging that tourists could also experience centennial burn-out, the Committee changed tactics and highlighted another tourist draw. The slogan on this float this time was "A Royal Welcome Awaits You in 1971 BC Canada"⁹⁷ capitalizing on the Queen's forthcoming visit. The Committee also continued its publicity work in other US venues. The 1971 Tourist Promotion and Hospitality Subcommittee blitzed Washington State by bringing BC entertainment to six cities, where they promoted the centennial and handed out brochures and trinkets.⁹⁸

British Columbia was a commodity that could be sold to British Columbians as well. Although outside marketing was directed at the US, there was also a campaign aimed at British Columbians to convince them to holiday in their own province to get a taste of what other regions had to offer.⁹⁹ The 1958 Centennial Committee launched a major advertising campaign designed to "keep residents in BC...and visit other parts of this great province."¹⁰⁰ Print advertisements designed by Vancouver firm, Cockfield, Brown and Company boasted of the uniqueness of several BC regions with an appeal to

⁹⁶ *Vancouver Sun*, 11 January 1966.

⁹⁷ *Victoria Colonist*, 1 January 1971.

⁹⁸ BCA, British Columbia Centennial '71 Committee (hereafter BCC '71 Committee), GR-1450, Box 8, file: Tourist Promotion and Hospitality, J.A. Barber to L.J. Wallace, 22 November 1971.

⁹⁹ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 10, file: Cockfield-Brown, Report on Marketing, Media, and Advertising, undated.

¹⁰⁰ *British Columbia Centennial Committee Newsletter*, February 1958.

discover them during the province's centennial year. One advertisement, depicted in figure 1, exhorts "Tour Vancouver Island and the "Sunshine Coast"...explore your Pacific frontier!" A cartoonish illustration of Vancouver Island and the west coast dotted with scenes of fishing, a totem pole and a ferry borders text that describes the scenic wonders and recreational opportunities visitors would encounter and reminded them to check newspapers for centennial events.¹⁰¹

Besides contributing to tourist revenues, the government and Centennial Committee had another motivation for urging British Columbians to visit other parts of the province. The government wanted citizens to see firsthand other communities in other regions celebrating the same events, with the same decorations and the same sentiments. This would reinforce the provincial nature of the celebration, and a sense of unity and provincehood. Certainly, an appreciation of the diverse geography of BC would cultivate a pride in the province. In a public ceremony on the legislature steps in 1958, Ray Williston told British Columbians that the time had come to be introduced to their province. "We cannot know the geographic wonders of the province until we visit them."¹⁰² This aspect of tourist promotion continued throughout BC's centennial run.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 10, file: Cockfield Brown, advertisement.

¹⁰² *Nanaimo Daily Free Press*, 28 April 1958.

¹⁰³ BCA, Provincial Secretary, G91-030, Tourist Promotion and Hospitality Subcommittee minutes, 27 October 1970 & 23 February 1971.

DISCOVER BEAUTIFUL B.C. THIS CENTENNIAL YEAR

Tour Vancouver Island and the "Sunshine Coast" . . . explore your Pacific frontier!

There's a different vacation awaiting you right at your own Province's westernmost boundaries. And what better time to discover Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast than in this Centennial Year?

Start your Island jaunt in and around Victoria. Ramble through Butchart Gardens, browse in the many specialty shops, take in the Parliament Buildings and all the other attractions that make up B.C.'s famous capital.

Head north along the Malahat Drive, through an ever-changing panorama of tall timber groves, sunny surf-rolled beaches and cascading waterfalls, to inviting up-Island resorts and famous fishing grounds. Again, at every town or village, check your Centennial Calendar of Events for everything from an Indian Potlach to a Vintage Car Rally!

Another wonderful part of our Pacific coast can be discovered on a visit to the misty, blue-green world of the Queen Charlotte Islands. Here you'll find a wealth of totems and reminders of the once mighty Haida Indian civilization, all in a setting of rugged grandeur.

And to round out your explorations - take a boat trip to the wonderland of island-studded inlets, fjords and bays that is our Sunshine Coast. From Bowen Island to Halfmoon Bay, to the Malaspina Peninsula, Powell River and beyond - choose from many places where you can fish, boat, swim or just bask, relaxed under the Pacific sun.

Plan now to see it all, do it all . . . there are so many wonderful moments awaiting you during your Centennial Year vacation on Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast! Consult your newspaper for the newest programme of Centennial events scheduled for the "Sunshine Coast."

B.C. CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

Figure 1: Cockfield Brown Advertisement. BCA, British Columbia Centennial '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 10, file: Cockfield Brown, Cockfield, Brown and Company Advertisement, 1958. Image courtesy of British Columbia Archives.

This chapter has explained the government's concerted efforts - through the two Subcommittees, the British Columbia International Trade Fair, the industrial caravan,

tourist promotion, the Pasadena Rose parade and the appearance of Premier Bennett in California - to further enhance British Columbia's industrial and tourist capabilities.

While the Committee concentrated on bringing outsiders in, it also could not ignore the chance to influence citizens with the very same projects by heralding the province's prosperous future and exhorting British Columbians to vacation in their very own province.

These efforts exemplify two related aspects of province building. First, the centenaries provided infrastructure for local manufacturers and tourist operators, just as provincial highways and dams were platforms for the benefits of state development. In modern BC, this populist government was in charge of providing new "gold rushes" for its small businesses. Many commentators noted the centennials' economic advantages. "British Columbians have also learned how to make living it up pay off. The special events which were part of the earlier centennials attracted hordes of tourists loaded with the green stuff....the invitations to the new crop of centennial visitors might well read: Keep B.C. green – bring dollars."¹⁰⁴ Despite a disappointing 1958 tourist year, the government was eventually successful; the repetition of tourist promotion and the Rose Bowl entries attest to this. In the meantime, the Committee garnered much positive press. In 1958, John Fisher, later to become the Commissioner of the 1967 National Centennial, praised the committee's work as "the best piece of tourist promoting ever seen in North America," and added that BC's model would be invaluable in planning Canada's 1967 event.¹⁰⁵ Second, gearing the projects of the Industrial Progress Subcommittee and the Tourist Promotion and Hospitality Subcommittee to the BC public

¹⁰⁴ Reprinted from the *Calgary Herald* in the *Trail Daily Times*, 25 May 1971.

¹⁰⁵ *Vancouver Province*, 20 January 1958.

gave the government a powerful tool to publicize its effect on the material wealth of the whole province, thereby constructing an industry-oriented consensus.

**Chapter Three:
“Running on the Same Ticket”: Fostering a Provincial Identity
Through Democratic Participation**

Following the austerity of the depression and war years, and the factionalism within the former coalition government, W.A.C. Bennett’s Social Credit brought a degree of political stability to the province and is credited for overcoming “the differentiated economic base, and sporadic settlement patterns [that] created many internal rivalries between the various regions of British Columbia.”¹ By building or developing provincial infrastructure the Bennett government shaped its economic strategy to control the geographical variances of the regions. These province building efforts created a more integrated economic and societal outlook. The centennial celebrations were a less material aspect of province building. By knitting together discrete regions and distant communities, the government sought to create a more provincial and modern identity in British Columbia that would support economic expansion.

This chapter and the following one examine the Centennial Committee’s desire to bring unity to the province’s peoples, thereby fostering a provincial identity. L.J. Wallace, the Committee Chair, predicted the celebration would “bring our people closer together, further a pride in their Province’s history and lay the firm cultural foundations from which to build, along with the rest of Canada, a great civilization.”² BC’s

¹ Stephen G. Tomblin, “In Defense of Territory: Province Building under WAC Bennett” (Ph.D. diss University of British Columbia, 1985), 122.

² British Columbia Archives (hereafter BCA), British Columbia Centennial ’58 Committee (hereafter BCC ’58 Committee), GR-1448, Box 7, file: Speaking Engagements, Speech by L.J. Wallace on the BC Centennial Celebration, undated. Similar sentiments appear in City of Vancouver Archives (hereafter CVA), Harold Merilees Fonds, MSS 426, file: BC Centennial 1958, speech by Larry McCance for

centennial organizers clearly focused on garnering mass participation in celebrations that were provincial in nature. In this way, the Committee took its lead from W.A.C. Bennett who was imbued with a populist streak and wanted all BC communities, whether urban or rural, large or small, to benefit from the prosperity of the province. His stewardship and infrastructure development were doing much to end their geographic isolationism - now commemoration and celebration would end their cultural and social isolation.

The Committee, particularly in 1958, aimed for inclusion and simultaneity in the celebrations. Centennial revelry was to be everywhere, not just the larger cities. Despite the trepidation of some, the province funded lasting monuments in any BC community that applied. As well, the Committee organized province-wide political appearances, sponsored commemorative days where citizens in far-flung communities all engaged in simultaneous activity, thereby “imagining community,” and dispatched the same traveling entertainments. All reinforced the idea that British Columbia was the sum of its parts. To encourage the mass participation that this required, the Committee worked towards having all communities whole-heartedly and genuinely partake in the celebrations by such means as per capita grants. Yet, the Committee also engendered it through allowing local committees “democratic participation.”³ Because it so desired the

Luncheon Meeting of Advertising and Sales Bureau, Vancouver Board of Trade, 8 April 1957.

³ This term of the 1958 Centennial Committee meant it allowed local communities freedom in local decisions and spending. CVA, Harold Merilees Fonds, MSS 426, file: BC Centennial Committee Proposals, 1956-1958, Proposed Per Capita Grant-in-aid for local Centennial Celebration Committees, 19 April 1956. However, the term, and what it meant, paralleled the beginning of a widespread unease with the level of civic and political participation in North America. A decade after the Committee used this term, political scientist Sidney Verba analyzed the importance of democratic participation. The Committee would have certainly agreed with Verba’s point that democratic participation “is also an end in and of itself. If all decisions are made for us – in circumstances where

act of celebration, it was less interested in how and what communities celebrated in local events, lest they not celebrate at all. To be sure, the Committee did provide copious suggestions and direction for local committees, but it also encouraged freedom through civic pride campaigns, community-planned and community-based celebrations, and the production of local histories, however, the Central Committees' messages were often stronger than local initiative. This chapter draws on examples from geographically diverse locales particularly Vancouver, Nanaimo, Prince Rupert and Prince George to argue that in all the celebrations, communities took their cue from the Centennial Committee in highlighting aspects of local history and culture in a wider celebration of provincial unity.

To engender full regional participation, the Committee put forward two philosophies for 1958: that all communities, large or small, would receive equal attention and that local committees would be treated as autonomous bodies.⁴ In 1956, it urged municipalities to appoint local committees and had representatives from the Community Recreations Branch visit unorganized areas and call meetings to elect local committees. The Central Committee "made suggestions" to these local Committees," such as incorporating under the Societies Act,⁵ but assured them it never "dictated policy."⁶

there are accepted democratic norms – our self-esteem may decline. The individual who has no chance to participate is, in some sense, not a full member or citizen." The Committee's aim to garner full regional representation would depend on committee's sense of citizenship. Sidney Verba, "Democratic Participation," *The Annals of the American Academy* 373 (September 1967): 53-78.

⁴ CVA, Harold Merilees Fonds, MSS 426, file: BC Centennial 1958, untitled document by E.F. Fox, 29 May 1958.

⁵ British Columbia Centennial Committee, *A Guide to Community Organization of the British Columbia Centennial Celebrations* (1956), 7.

⁶ British Columbia Centennial Committee, *The Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee* (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1959), 221.

Some, such as that in Vancouver, did incorporate and prepared a constitution outlining their objectives as: to “encourage, promote, form, carry-out, manage and finance” local celebrations and to enter into partnerships for “beautification, decoration etc. of buildings or streets in Vancouver.”⁷

When communities responded enthusiastically to the idea of joining the celebrations, the heartened 1958 Centennial Committee publicized this sense of unity. As community after community signed on,⁸ the Centennial Committee’s newsletter boasted how “interested visitors who drop into Centennial Headquarters in Victoria often say that it reminds them of an election. It is a correct observation except all our 225 committees are running on the same ticket to make British Columbia the most exciting and attractive province to be in during 1958.”⁹ The Committee reveled in its success. Wallace informed one audience, “an army of some 20,000 volunteers now are actively engaged in planning provincial and local centennial celebrations” and that he expected that by year’s end, “nearly every British Columbian will be directly or indirectly associated with some centennial activity.”¹⁰ Benedict Anderson reminds us that nations (and states, regions, provinces, communities) are sociological constructions dependant on “imagined communities” that is confidence that others are engaged in the same activities.¹¹ Using such language as “running on the same ticket” and that volunteers constituted an “army,”

⁷CVA, British Columbia Centennial Committee Fonds, MSS 178, file 5: Incorporation 1957, Societies Act Constitution, July 1957.

⁸ By the conclusion of 1958, 333 local committees had been formed.

⁹ BC Centennial Committee, *Newsletter*, February 1957.

¹⁰ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 7, file: Speaking Engagements, Speech by L.J. Wallace on the BC Centennial Celebrations, undated.

¹¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991), 26.

certainly underscored and reinforced the government's aim to rally mass participation and in so doing, encourage a consensus to back the province.

To be sure, the government provided great incentives for communities to become involved through the per capita grant system that encouraged democratic participation, enthusiasm, and initiative in unincorporated areas, towns and cities by giving the "local citizenry" the funds to generate their own ideas and events.¹² The onus was on the community to organize and raise funds, the province would then match one dollar per capita; forty cents to go towards local celebrations and sixty cents to go towards the building of lasting monuments. In most cases, communities raised two to three times the necessary amount to garner matching funds.¹³

Despite the rhetoric of democratic participation and autonomy, the per capita grant system actually gave the Centennial Committee important control and leverage over community activities and projects. For instance, the Committee made communities settle on one (or several smaller) project(s) when they applied for the grant, "to relieve the British Columbia Centennial Committee of any embarrassment in determining the merits among several proposed projects in the local community."¹⁴ The Committee either approved the project as appropriately commemorative or returned it to the local committee to reconsider. The Committee did not want "to have a great number of white

¹² CVA, Harold Merilees Fonds, MSS 426 file: BC Centennial Committee Proposals, 1956-1958, British Columbia Centennial Committee Proposed Per Capita Grant-in-aid for local Centennial Celebration Committees, 19 April 1956.

¹³ L.J. Wallace, personal interview, 23 January 2003.

¹⁴ CVA, Harold Merilees Fonds, MSS 426 file: BC Centennial Committee Proposals, 1956-1958, British Columbia Centennial Committee Proposed Per Capita Grant-in-aid for local Centennial Celebration Committees, 19 April 1956.

elephants erected as a reminder of the Centennial Celebrations.”¹⁵ Former Cabinet Minister Wesley Black later said community “projects of course had to be cleared because we didn’t want anything frivolous ... and meaningless.”¹⁶ The Committee was particularly concerned over the projects submitted by smaller rural communities with little experience or opportunity to plan and build such amenities as libraries, museums, and community centres. Others questioned their abilities as well. A member of the Vancouver centennial committee early on acknowledged the challenges the Committee might face,

The situation as I see it, is that a million and a half busy people scattered throughout 36 cities, 29 districts and 18 villages are embarking upon a celebration, each of the 83 communities promoting their own. They are of every nationality, some not quite sure what it is they are celebrating and whether its form should be a carousal or a thanksgiving for their good fortune; they have had no experience in such matters. Some have never seen the word ‘centennial’ until recently. Some do not know.

To give this conglomerate mass direction which will lead to a common goal, and ultimate success, is a heavy responsibility and we wish you good luck and ardent thoughtful helpers.¹⁷

Indeed, the Committee dispatched Regional Consultants who curtailed questionable projects before they came in for formal application. In the Northwest, for instance, Smithers-based D.M. McCooey warned Wallace that New Hazelton wanted to improve

¹⁵ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 24, file: Vancouver Apr. 56-Mar 31/57, L.J. Wallace to A.P.W. Watkinson, secretary, Civic Bureau, Vancouver Board of Trade, 27 November 1957.

¹⁶ BCA, Provincial Archives of British Columbia Interview Collection, 1974-1987 (hereafter PABCIC), T1410, 14-1, 16, Transcript Wesley Black interviewed by Langlois 1977-78.

¹⁷ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 24, file: Vancouver Apr. 56-Mar 31/57, Major J.S. Matthews to L.J. Wallace, 28 February 1957.

an existing community hall by renovating the bathroom. He ended his letter “aside from facetiously wondering where they might put the project sign, would any or all of this be eligible for centennial assistance?”¹⁸ Wallace replied that the Committee frowned upon renovations to an existing building and suggested that New Hazelton should “be challenged” to build a separate room or lounge to serve as a fitting memorial project.¹⁹ In the end, New Hazelton enlarged and improved a community park and ball field as its project.²⁰ Wallace was a smooth negotiator and vetoed community projects without accompanying strife. In a 1971 retrospective, some BC Centennial literature acknowledged his ability in this respect, as it described how the community of Harrison “wanted to spend its 1958 Centennial grant to hunt for a sasquatch – the legendary wild hairy man who lives in the mountains near Harrison Lake – it taxed Wallace’s calm. After thinking about it, he came up with a solution that typified his ability to veto a plan but still leave the community happy. Knowing that there was little chance of a pay-out, Wallace suggested instead a \$5000 reward for the first live sasquatch to be captured.”²¹

While most BC communities took advantage of these funds, some urban British Columbians derided the funds as a “60 cent carrot.”²² Remembering the construction of two large auditoria in Calgary and Edmonton for Alberta’s Golden Jubilee, they may have believed the province should mark the centennial with expensive permanent legacies in the larger centers. Therefore, they questioned the expense in smaller areas as

¹⁸ BCA, Canadian Confederation Centennial Committee (hereafter CCC Committee), GR-1449, Box 4, file: Regional Consultant, D.M. McCooey to L.J. Wallace, 18 June 1964.

¹⁹ Ibid., L.J. Wallace to D.M. McCooey, 25 June 1964.

²⁰ *The Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee*, 300.

²¹ *BC Centennial '71 Spokesman*, March 1971.

²² *Nanaimo Daily Free Press*, 30 May 1958.

a *Vancouver Province* cartoon depicted. The Al Beaton cartoon, ridiculing the amount given to tiny communities, portrayed the sole resident of Point Lonesome lighthouse erecting a commemorative statue of himself.²³ In the same vein, a Vancouver editor satirically asked “we are consumed with curiosity about what project North Rolla could be planning that would bring a provincial grant of \$40. And what extravaganza is Rose Lake planning with its grant of \$34.50? Perhaps Britannia Beach intends to make a centennial project of raising a new street lamp with its grant of \$310.”²⁴ Another editorial asked about the limited projects smaller communities could undertake, “must all this money be dribbled away on a proliferation of tinpot projects to which, under ordinary circumstances most communities would grant the lowest priorities?”²⁵

The Committee made this a provincial celebration – with the accompanying grant – precisely to do away with this superior attitude that divided urban from rural, and large cities from small communities. Bowing to Vancouver’s criticisms would do little to placate the rural regions where Bennett’s early electoral success and expansionist visions lay. Furthermore, for the Centennial Committee, the per capita grant system allowed for projects – by and large for community recreation – that may not have been built otherwise. Few communities outside of the lower mainland and lower Vancouver Island had many recreational amenities. The boom-and-bust and transient nature of many BC

²³ *Vancouver Province*, 9 September 1957.

²⁴ *Vancouver Times*, 6 May 1965. The Rolla District in the Peace River combined their grants to complete a curling rink already in progress; while Rose Lake’s grant totaled only \$48, the community raised nearly \$10,000 to build a pier and diving raft; and Britannia Beach combined its grant with that of neighbouring Squamish to construct a library. *The Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee*, 304 and 305.

²⁵ *Vancouver Sun*, 4 May 1965.

communities had not encouraged citizens to invest in luxuries. However, the vision of BC's social and economic future that Social Credit put forth in the celebrations encouraged communities in the hinterlands to think of themselves as the vanguards of booming populations and explosive growth. The per capita grant scheme, by funding lasting memorial projects such as parks and museums, certainly worked to make hinterland communities attractive and livable.

Communities such as Nanaimo, Prince Rupert, and Prince George, which had populations of between 13,000 and 19,000, built projects to serve basic community recreational needs in 1958. Nanaimo built a desperately needed exhibition center to host such events as “exhibition fair displays, square dances, [and] convention[s]” that was capable of “accommodating up to 1,250 persons at one time.”²⁶ Prince Rupert built a small museum, and Prince George developed Fort George Park on the banks of the Fraser River. In the later centennials, as the populations grew and the towns developed, the local committees embarked on more elaborate projects addressing cultural, artistic and recreational needs, including a mosaic fountain in Prince George, and a golf course in Prince Rupert for the 1966/67 commemorations.²⁷

Citizens welcomed the opportunity to improve and beautify their communities. In some cases, community groups undertook projects without government funding. In Nanaimo, for example, the Gyro Club established a playground, the Kiwanis Club restored Nanaimo's oldest cemetery, and the Italian community donated a fountain to

²⁶ Nanaimo Community Archives (hereafter NCA), Civic Boards and Committees, 1992-011-C, Box 6: BC Centennial Committee, Final Report of the Nanaimo Centennial Committee, undated.

²⁷ *The Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee*, 303 & 304.

beautify downtown.²⁸ Similarly when the Prince George 1971 Committee chose to construct a museum in a stockade for its commemorative project, local sawmills and businesses readily contributed cash and supplies for the building which was later turned over to the Fraser Fort George Museum Society.²⁹

As the most populous center in the province, Vancouver raised \$682,000 for its 1958 commemorative project; the local centennial committee raised \$462,493.60, and the province contributed \$219,506.40.³⁰ Unlike the majority of BC communities, Vancouver's nearly 400,000 residents already had the libraries and parks that smaller communities often lacked. Therefore, Vancouver had many options, but the local committee decided the project should unite the residents no matter their religion or race. Early in 1956, the Vancouver committee approached city council with the idea for a centennial shrine dedicated to the "brotherhood of man" in Stanley Park which "all groups regardless of creed or colour could use.... for functions." Although the committee argued that as "the only one of its kind in the world" it would draw tourists, the city rejected it because it would result in a parking nightmare in the already-crowded park.³¹ The next suggestion - to build a maritime museum to house a restored St. Roch - was more mundane, but the committee tried to tailor it to the same objectives of uniting all residents. In fact, the Native Sons of BC were already organizing the preservation of

²⁸ NCA, Civic Boards and Committees, 1992-011-C, Box 6: BC Centennial Committee, Final Report of the Nanaimo Centennial Committee, undated.

²⁹ BCA, British Columbia Centennial '71 Committee (hereafter BCC '71 Committee), GR-1450, Box 39, file: Prince George C.P. Pattulo to L.J. Wallace, 8 December 1971.

³⁰ *The Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee*, 309. In comparison, Prince Rupert raised \$41,129.74 from all sources for its museum, and Nanaimo, \$30,000.00 for its exhibition center.

³¹ CVA, City Council and Office of the City Clerk Fonds, Series 27, File 12: Centennial Reports, Jack Diamond to Mayor Hume, 12 December 1956.

the R.C.M.P. Arctic schooner, and many Vancouver citizens endorsed it as a project.³² Once the local committee and city settled on this project, they publicized it as “more than a museum – the plan is for a community cultural center” for community groups to use, as well as providing a tourist attraction. Furthermore, the St. Roch museum would encourage close cooperation with schools that could use it in their curriculum. This project would also fit within the centennial’s mandate of each community celebrating its particular history within a BC context. The Vancouver committee reasoned it was the “most appropriate to the occasion in that the history and the future of Vancouver and B.C. generally are inextricably bound up in the sea – and it was a basic consideration that the character and function of the city’s centennial project should be related to the history of the province.”³³ Two acres of land in Kitsilano were reclaimed from the sea to accommodate the museum.

Having communities and municipalities fundraise themselves for lasting commemorative projects fostered community pride and cohesion while also bolstering the province’s capital assets. The return was worth it; for the 1958 centenary the government contributed \$820,000, but in return “the Province is richer by more than \$4,000,000 in actual value of the projects.”³⁴ The investment in the per capita grant system continued to reap rewards in following centennials; the province contributed approximately \$2,500,000 in 1966/67 while the total value of projects reached \$11,000,000, and its contributions of \$2,000,000 in 1971, resulted in a \$10,000,000

³² CVA, BC Centennial Committee, MSS 178, volume 1, file 6: St. Roch 1955-1958, Memo, undated.

³³ BCA, BCC ‘58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 24: Vancouver April 1/57-Dec 31/57, Vancouver Centennial Maritime Museum Committee Press Release, 31 October 1957.

³⁴ *Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee*, 286.

return.³⁵ Wallace justified the province's expense as being for "projects designed for the use of people – projects which might otherwise have never been started."³⁶ An outlay of initial funds for the grants resulted in part of the province's wider province building project. Between 1958 and 1971 communities acquired many capital assets including swimming pools, public art, museums, libraries and recreation centers which enriched communities, and in turn, the province. Black reflected on the importance of the per capita grants. "What we did was support people who wanted to help themselves...even though they were just planting trees ...they were doing it themselves, and putting a percentage of their own money in it, then it became ... something of lasting value as far as the Province of British Columbia is concerned."³⁷ The province was particularly pleased that many communities built community halls with their funds. Concerned that mass culture of the mid-twentieth century was putting civic life in jeopardy,³⁸ the community hall projects reassured the province that the social growth of its communities were not neglected; "taken together, they appear to have changed much of the face of B.C. It is certain they have strengthened the community life of the province for many years to come."³⁹

Besides the bricks and mortar approach of the grant system, province building also took less tangible forms during the celebrations. Several centennial projects

³⁵ British Columbia Centennial '71 Committee, *The Celebration of the Century 1871-1971: The Report of the British Columbia Centennial '71 Committee* (Victoria BC,1973) i, and *BC Centennial '71 Spokesman*, (May 1970). To celebrate BC's entrance into confederation in 1971 the federal government also contributed 2 million dollars.

³⁶ *Kamloops Daily Sentinel*, 5 November 1971.

³⁷ BCA, PABCIC, T1410, 14-1, 16, transcript, Wesley Black interviewed by W.J. Langlois 1977-78.

³⁸ See L.B. Kuffert, *Canadian Responses to Modern Life and Mass Culture, 1939-1967* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003).

³⁹ *The Western Giant*, July 1958.

attempted to bind together discrete communities into a political unity. For the first centennial, Premier Bennett and his cabinet ministers were visible in all areas of the province undoubtedly to further their political fortunes, but also to reinforce the idea that British Columbia was one. With this intent, the government held cabinet meetings in cities such as Nanaimo, Prince Rupert and Trail and literally took “the government to the people.”⁴⁰ During 1967, the Centennial Committee instituted a “traveling gavel” specifically carved for use at civic and council meetings throughout the province. Like so many of the centennial projects, Wallace explained it “is serving to unite the Province in marking the Centenary, and to encourage Centennial celebrations on a local basis.”⁴¹ In the spirit of centennial, the gavel was transported from municipality to municipality by automobile, rail, air, horse power, canoe, ferry and float plane to highlight past and present modes of transportation so important to the economic development of the province.⁴²

The provincial tour of Princess Margaret also underlined that all BC communities, large or small, were worthy of a bit of regality and a glimpse of the princess, a “tourist attraction” herself.⁴³ The Committee certainly put her to good use; she visited as many towns and communities as her two-week stay would allow where she was welcomed with “loyalty and affection in cities, towns and hamlets from Victoria to Fort St. John and from Kamloops to Field.”⁴⁴ In having her attend community centennial events such as a Courtenay potlatch, a Williams Lake rodeo and the Nanaimo cake-cutting (below), the

⁴⁰ *The Western Giant*, September 1958.

⁴¹ *BC Centennial Spokesman*, April 1967.

⁴² *BC Government News*, April/May 1967.

⁴³ R.B. Worley, *The Wonderful World of W.A.C. Bennett* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1971), 211.

⁴⁴ *British Columbia Government News*, July 1958.

Committee underlined a common experience for British Columbians in that they “will be attracted to the same sights and sounds as will entertain the princess.”⁴⁵ Another important function of the Princess’s visit was to garner publicity by “officially” opening developmental and cultural projects, thus, reminding British Columbians of the great progress being undertaken by the Bennett government. All around the province, she was accompanied by local MLAs in performing these openings.⁴⁶ Besides opening the floating bridge across Okanagan Lake at Kelowna, the Pacific Great Eastern Railway Bridge across the Peace River, and the Preventorium at Children’s Hospital in Vancouver, Princess Margaret also opened New Westminster’s recreational “Century House,” participated in the opening of the restored National Park of Fort Langley, and gave a big boost to Vancouver’s first Festival of the Arts by attending a performance.⁴⁷

The Community Activities Subcommittee suggested another symbolic project, providing flags that all communities would raise on a specific day.⁴⁸ Such a simultaneous ritual to indicate the “commencement” of the bulk of centennial events around the province appealed to the 1958 Centennial Committee. It set aside Sunday 27 April 1958 for a “day of prayer” and thanksgiving, and the raising of centennial flags on numerous provincial buildings. The Religious Activities Subcommittee prepared the

⁴⁵ *The Western Giant*, July 1958.

⁴⁶ The biography of Ray Williston, member from Fort George, indicates that accompanying the Princess was not an easy task. She was “willful” and seemed to take delight in fouling up the carefully planned royal itinerary, by eagerly accepting gifts without proper protocol, disappearing through doors, and demanding unscheduled stops. Eileen Williston and Betty Keller, *Forests, Power and Policy: The Legacy of Ray Williston* (Prince George: Caitlin Press, 1997), 108-113.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, and *The Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee*, 155.

⁴⁸ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 4, Community Activities Subcommittee minutes, 28 May 1956 and 9 September 1957.

prayers and dedications for this day, which was its main project.⁴⁹ Prince Rupert residents - children, adults and officials alike - convened on the steps of the courthouse to witness the event, as figure 2 illustrates. In Nanaimo, 2,000 persons attended the flag raising ceremony where a colourful and varied procession of community groups included the “Canadian Scottish Pipe Band, armed services Air Cadets, Canadian Legion and women’s auxiliary, Moose lodge, Brownies Club, Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, Sea Rangers, Junior Forest Wardens, representatives of IODE, Nanaimo Shrine Club in yellow jackets, green trousers and red fezes [sic], and purpled fezed members of the Elks.”⁵⁰ As night fell in Nanaimo and elsewhere, bonfires were lit to end the symbolic day.⁵¹ Just as the Committee planned for the grant system to be an equalizer, it hoped this powerful public ritual would draw British Columbians together in the “steady, anonymous, simultaneous activity” of others.⁵² For this one day, the regional, climatic and demographic diversity of British Columbia would fade away, and a new provincial atmosphere would emerge.⁵³ Combined with the knowledge that individuals were replicating the same rituals in the

⁴⁹ *The Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee*, 166.

⁵⁰ NCA, Civic Boards and Committees, 1992-011-C, Box 6: BC Centennial Committee, Final Report of the Nanaimo Centennial Committee, undated, and *Nanaimo Daily Free Press*, 28 April 1958.

⁵¹ *Nanaimo Daily Free Press*, 28 April 1958.

⁵² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991), 26.

⁵³ Turner theorizes that such public and simultaneous rituals create new cultures or ‘communitas,’ and in so doing provides a liminal or ‘transitional’ phase “from one state of society to another, when the past has lost its grip and the future has not yet taken definite shape.” Individuals in this liminal stage lose their pre-ritual status, and communitas emerges “stressing equality and comradeship as norms.” Quoted in Robert Rutherford, “Canada’s August Festival: Communitas, Liminality, and Social Memory,” *Canadian Historical Review* 72 (June 1996): 241 and Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974) reprinted in Paul Bohannan and Mark Glazer (eds) *High Points in Anthropology* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), 504.

day of prayer throughout the entire province, regionalism was to fade away, to be replaced by an identity based on the province.



Figure 2: Raising Centennial Flag at Prince Rupert Courthouse. Prince Rupert City and Regional Archives and Museum of Northern B.C. Wrathall Photo Finishing Fonds. Reprinted with Permission.

In its quest for regional equality, the government also wanted to enhance cultural life. While all communities were eligible for a forty-cent per capita grant to go towards staging celebrations and entertainment, the Committee recognized that small communities could only afford very modest shows. Therefore, it provided shows and entertainment for many communities outside the lower mainland and lower island who could not otherwise afford such entertainments, in order “link together different areas of the Province in order to give them a full sense of participation in the year-round programme.”⁵⁴ In some cases, the Central Committee took responsibility for planning and booking the shows, in others, it suggested entertainments but required the individual committees to make their own arrangements. For instance, Wallace instructed communities who had booked the RCMP Musical Ride in 1958 to arrange additional local attractions since “it is only 21 minutes in length.”⁵⁵ During 1958, many parts of the province enjoyed, for instance, Prince George’s Cariboo Chorus, playwright Lister Sinclair’s “World of the Wonderful Dark,” a two-hour variety show called “BC Centurama” and dance band leader Mart Kenney with His Western Gentlemen who played in 59 communities including Golden. In thanking Wallace, Golden’s local centennial committee praised “the Band’s friendliness and attitude toward a small community,” and commended the Central Committee “for making it possible for a small community to have a notable Band as part of their Centennial Celebrations.”⁵⁶ Given the success of these entertainments, the practice was repeated in 1966 with twelve main

⁵⁴ CVA, Harold Merilees Fonds, MSS 426, file: BC Centennial 1958, Untitled Document by E.F. Fox, 29 May 1958.

⁵⁵ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 24: Vancouver, L.J. Wallace to H.Merilees, 22 October 1957.

⁵⁶ *Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee*, 206.

shows reaching close to 200 communities.⁵⁷ Then, in 1971, British Columbians around the province were treated to the Vancouver Opera Association's version of Hansel and Gretel, an extensive tour of variety troupe, Barkerville '71 and the always-popular RCMP Musical Ride among others.⁵⁸ Traveling centennial entertainment was so anticipated as a right of BC citizenship, that communities were miffed if they were left off the tour itinerary.⁵⁹ In other cases, committees tried to rearrange the tour schedule to suit local needs and garner the most attendance. In anticipation of the traveling Barkerville '71 show, Prince Rupert's chairman, R.G. Large requested that the dates be changed because "we cannot expect any great response from the public until the end of the week when payday occurs."⁶⁰ His request was granted. Similarly, in 1967 Nanaimo's chairman requested a second night of the Barkerville Show since "we have had to turn hundreds of people away" on the first date.⁶¹

Besides providing festivities in all communities, the Central Committee also wanted to ensure that British Columbia would be at its best for the anticipated flood of tourists. Thus, a major theme for community celebrations was beautification. In one

⁵⁷ Canadian Confederation Centennial Committee of British Columbia, *A Tale of Two Centenaries: The Report of the Canadian Confederation Committee of British Columbia*, (1968), 7.

⁵⁸ *Ibid* and *The Celebration of the Century 1871-1971*, 9-20.

⁵⁹ For instance, the chairman of the Prince Rupert centennial committee, Dr. R.G. Large, inquired why the Vancouver Symphony, which was traveling that year, was not to appear in Prince Rupert. L.J. Wallace explained that all the other traveling events were going to the city, but the "Programme has been spread out as fairly as possible in order to make as many features available to all centres of the province." BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, box 23, file: Prince Rupert, R.G. Large to L.J. Wallace, October 1957 and Wallace to Large, 15 October 1957.

⁶⁰ BCA, BCC '71 Committee, GR-1450, Box 40, file: Prince Rupert, administration, R.G. Large to L.J. Wallace, 16 June 1971.

⁶¹ BCA, CCC Committee, GR-1449, Box 74, file: Nanaimo: City of, F. Ney to L.J. Wallace, 24 January 1967. Mayor Ney's request, however, was turned down.

newsletter, the Committee announced a “Clean-up” campaign jointly sponsored by the BC Chamber of Commerce. Its slogan was “keep B.C. green...and clean,” in order “to give B.C. a spic and span appearance for its birthday party.”⁶² Picking up litter and beautifying their main streets with the hanging of centennial buntings and decorations gave British Columbians another opportunity to participate in a ritual that went beyond their localities. The president of the BC and Yukon Junior Chamber of Commerce admonished, “no community can attend its own Birthday Party with a dirty face.”⁶³ Certainly the clean-up campaign appealed to community interests. The Nanaimo centennial committee, for instance, reminded its park board of the importance of presenting a tip-top image during 1958 because “more people will visit...than in any year in our history. It is therefore essential that our city be looking her best. It is to be hoped that hanging baskets of flowers might be displayed on the light standards as in former years, visitors are always particularly pleased at this display.”⁶⁴ Other cities were equally enthusiastic about presenting a uniform and pleasing image. During the 1966/67 Centennial, the Prince George centennial committee appealed to the Committee for information kits “to have all of our downtown merchants subscribe to standards kits of street and store decorations.”⁶⁵ Prince Rupert chose its 1971 lasting memorial based on appearance. The local centennial chairman suggested building a garden in front of the new recreational complex, which, because of a lack of money for landscaping, was an

⁶² *British Columbia Centennial Committee Newsletter*, February 1958.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, undated.

⁶⁴ NCA, Civic Boards and Committees, 1992-011-C, Box 6, file: Nanaimo Centennial Committee, George Molecey to R. Holmes (Secretary Nanaimo Parks Board), 10 April 1957.

⁶⁵ BCA, CCC Committee, GR-1449, Box 80, file: Prince George, city of, Arran Thomson (Prince George city manager) to L.J. Wallace, 28 April 1966. The Centennial Committee had such kits and forwarded them to Prince George.

“eyesore.” A garden with totem poles and an ornamental bridge would give “people coming into Rupert on Highway 16....something beautiful to see as they arrive.”⁶⁶ Such concerns and requests suggest that local organizers welcomed opportunities given for aesthetic improvements and citizen pride.

Central centennial planners also wanted communities to gain pride by staging locally organized celebrations and commemorations. In the suggestions forwarded to local communities, the Provincial Committee assured them that while it would assist, “the big 1958 Celebration is primarily your party. A high degree of *originality and enterprise* in every community will make the celebrations a complete and unqualified success.”⁶⁷ In 1958 local committees outdid themselves trying to live up to the Central Committee’s expectations, and mirrored the provincial celebrations in staging year-round events.

Vancouver recognized that a wide range of events was needed to attract the interest of all its residents. The *News Herald* cautioned the local chairman that “everyone has an idea for the centennial and not all of them are of a ‘high cultural standard.’ But those are the people who are going to decide whether this is a triumph or a moderate success. The Centennial is for everyone.”⁶⁸ The Vancouver committee agreed since this was a major aim of the BC Centennial Committee. To have “something for everyone – visitors and residents alike”⁶⁹ the Vancouver committee planned some 400 large and small events throughout the year “to help Vancouver fulfill her role as British Columbia’s

⁶⁶ *Prince Rupert Daily News*, 29 October 1970.

⁶⁷ British Columbia Centennial Committee, *A Guide to Community Organization of the British Columbia Centennial Celebrations*, (1956), 2. Emphasis added.

⁶⁸ *News Herald*, 20 January 1957.

⁶⁹ CVA, BC Centennial Committee, MSS 178, volume 1 file 9: News Releases, Report on Centennial Year in Vancouver, undated.

major City during Centennial Year.”⁷⁰ The Vancouver committee sponsored such traditional fare as an Easter parade, park concerts, and sporting events, but also drew upon its distinctiveness and financial resources to offer up dazzling events. For instance, the May long weekend featured “much hoopla and gaiety” with a Chinatown dragon parade “the biggest....ever seen outside of China” and a \$10,000 fireworks show.⁷¹ In June 1958, the Vancouver committee organized an eight-night run of the B.C. Centennial Searchlight Tattoo at Empire Stadium. This was a large military tattoo, modeled on Edinburgh’s, but with a twist, a mock battle “with an ‘attack’ from outer space using space ships and space men,” along with traditional bands, drills and military ceremonies.⁷² Finally, the Vancouver committee also sponsored the first annual Vancouver International Festival of the Arts, employing some 400 musicians, actors and dancers and attracting some 100,000 attendees, making it a “red letter year” in Vancouver.⁷³

Likewise, Nanaimo wholeheartedly participated in provincial events and boasted in 1957 that it had the “most advanced” plans for the centennial celebrations in the province.⁷⁴ Rising to the challenge of the Centennial Committee which urged local committees to “keep an open mind” about possible events lest celebrations “have a great deal of sameness,” Nanaimo chose a most original and monumental project to celebrate

⁷⁰ Ibid., Interim Report of the Vancouver Centennial Committee, 30 December 1958.

⁷¹ Ibid., News Release, undated.

⁷² BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 24, file: Vancouver, News Release, 14 April 1958.

⁷³ CVA, BC Centennial Committee, MSS 178, volume 1 file 9: News Releases, Final Report, undated and CVA, BC Centennial Committee, MSS 178, volume 1 file 8: Publications, Vancouver Centennial Calendar, June 1958.

⁷⁴ NCA, Civic Boards and Committees, 1992-011-C, Box 6, file: Nanaimo Centennial Committee, Planning Document, 30 January 1957.

the 1858 centenary – a behemoth 10,000 pound, twenty-foot high birthday cake ostentatiously decorated with some 15,000 local and BC motifs replicated in sugar, such as Nanaimo’s bastion, totem poles and the BC parliament buildings.⁷⁵ So unusual was this project that it gained provincial and national sponsors for the required five tons of ingredients and warranted much press.⁷⁶ In order to carry the project out, Nanaimo’s hospital chef was sent to Chicago’s Wilton School of Cake Decorating to learn how to fashion such decorations. Although the original intent of such a large cake was “so that everyone in the city could have a piece,”⁷⁷ the scope and expense of the cake required the Nanaimo committee to broaden its appeal. When the province announced that Princess Margaret would officially cut the cake, the local committee added “panels depicting various members of the royal family heavily garnished with Rococo frames of sugar icing.”⁷⁸ At the urging of L.J. Wallace it also marketed it as “BC’s official birthday cake,” and offered other BC communities the opportunity to purchase a candle with their names “painted in bold lettering” to adorn it. In this way, the Nanaimo committee felt “that such extra decoration will lend a wonderful province-wide atmosphere of identification with the official birthday cake.”⁷⁹ Since the cake would interest royal-watchers and monarchists outside of the province, it also tried to recoup the costs by selling souvenir boxes of the cake that the princess cut in her half-hour visit on 16 July 1958. This was the sort of project the BC Centennial Committee wished. Its suggestion booklet had counseled, “an unusual event in a small community could easily overshadow

⁷⁵ See Chapter Five for an examination of the use of sugar totems on the cake.

⁷⁶ *Nanaimo Daily Free Press*, 9 July 1958 and 16 July 1958.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 9 July 1958.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 16 July 1958.

⁷⁹ NCA, Civic Boards and Committees, 1992-011-C, Box 3: Nanaimo Centennial Committee Correspondence 1957-1959, file: Candles for Cake, Memo, undated.

a big, expensive, orthodox celebration in a neighbouring city.”⁸⁰ This certainly qualified, and also represented the melding of a local initiative with a provincial focus which could be highly publicized.

Nanaimo’s organizers and press were ebullient that the birthday cake garnered such interest and admiration. The local paper enthused that “at least 125 photographers and reporters from all over the United States and Canada” would attend at the cake cutting ceremony.⁸¹ Local people and tourists could visit the cake displayed in a specially constructed air-conditioned building on the Safeway parking lot. The *Nanaimo Daily Free Press* even boasted in a headline that “Nanaimo [was the] Highlight of Princess’ BC Visit”⁸² and reveled in her presence for the occasion, describing her wonder at it: “Taking the sword her Royal Highness plunged it through the thick icing of the cake. In a sawing motion assisted by members of the party she cut the cake downward. She then removed her glove to feel the texture of the cake. She gazed at the cake from all angles...then she asked if she could walk around the cake.”⁸³ In the end, the Nanaimo committee could not recoup all the costs of the cake, but proudly reported to the Centennial Committee that they sold some 50,000 souvenir boxes of cake, many through mail requests from Europe thus raising the profile of British Columbia and its centennial.⁸⁴

Nanaimo participated in the provincial celebrations of 1966/67 and 1971 with as much vigor and originality. In 1966/67 the Central Committee co-opted the Birthday

⁸⁰ *A Guide to Community Organization of the British Columbia Centennial Celebrations*, 15.

⁸¹ *Nanaimo Daily Free Press*, 7 July 1958.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 12 July 1958.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 16 July 1958.

⁸⁴ NCA, Civic Boards and Committees, 1992-011-C: Box 6: BC Centennial Committee, Final Report of the Nanaimo Centennial Committee, undated.

cake project, but Nanaimo organizers came up with an equally original and newsworthy idea - Bathtub races. Local firms and organizations retrofitted bathtubs to make them seaworthy and raced across the Strait of Georgia to Vancouver's English Bay. This "spiral[ed] into a tremendous thing" and attracted CBC coverage.⁸⁵ It was such a success that the community made it an annual event, and today it is incorporated into an annual four-day festival in July.

Civic leaders in smaller communities such as Prince Rupert and Prince George were just as eager to take part in the celebrations and highlight their contributions to the provincial past. The Prince George committee, for example, asked the Central Committee to help finance a Canadian tour of the British Grenadier Guards including a stop in Prince George since their bearskin headgear came from the local area. Deeming the tour financially impossible, the Committee turned down the request.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, the Prince George committee spread their recreational and commemorative events throughout the year beginning and ending "with a New Year's Eve dance sponsored by the JCC [Junior Chamber of Commerce]" and including curling, ice carnival and square-dancing in February, a fishing derby, Highland games, golf tournament and art show in June, and a Remembrance day patriotic program in November.⁸⁷ Prince Rupert also had a number of small events during the year beginning with the award of cash and silver to the first baby born,⁸⁸ and a centennial bonspiel in

⁸⁵ BCA, CCC Committee, GR-1449, Box 74, file: Nanaimo, city of, Frank Ney to L.J. Wallace, 26 January 1967.

⁸⁶ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 23, file: Prince George, Mac Mackenzie to Mr. McCance, 8 February 1957.

⁸⁷ Ibid., Forty Cent Per Capita Grant Application, undated.

⁸⁸ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 23, file: Prince Rupert, Untitled Document, undated.

March, but its main celebration was “Potlatch Week” in the last week in July. As is evident from the official program in figure 3, the organizers melded local endeavors such as parades and sporting events with traveling provincial entertainments like a historical caravan and the variety show entitled BC Centurama. The events combined the popular (dances, fireworks) with the commemorative (museum opening, pioneers’ banquet). Organizers addressed the various constituencies that made up Prince Rupert’s citizenry to

<u>OFFICIAL</u>	<u>PROGRAM</u>
<p>MONDAY, JULY 28 CENTURAMA Navy Drill Hall Afternoon and Evening</p> <p>TUESDAY, JULY 29 CENTURAMA Navy Drill Hall Afternoon and Evening Presentation of Certificates to 1886 Pioneers by The Premier, The Honorable W. A. C. Bennett at Civic Banquet - Civic Centre</p> <p>WEDNESDAY, JULY 30 CENTURAMA Navy Drill Hall Afternoon and Evening</p> <p>THURSDAY, JULY 31 HOME - COMING DAY a.m. — Welcome to Caravan His Worship, Mayor P. J. Lester 7:00 p.m. — Pioneers’ Banquet Canadian Legion Hall Presentations by C. H. Orme</p> <p>FRIDAY, AUGUST 1 YOUTH DAY 10:00 a.m. — Children’s Parade Afternoon — Track and Swimming Meet McClymont Park 8:00 p.m. — Crowning of “Miss Prince Rupert” Centennial Queen Navy Drill Hall 10:00 p.m. — Teen Dance - Navy Drill Hall</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SATURDAY AUGUST 2</p> <p>10:00 a.m. — Grand Parade</p> <p>12:00 a.m. — Port Day Luncheon - C. N. R. Dock</p> <p>12:00 a.m. — Baseball Tournament - Roosevelt Park</p> <p>1:00 p.m. — Port Day - C. N. R. Dock Boat Races Commercial and Pleasure Craft Marine Variety Acts</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p style="text-align: center;">COURT HOUSE GROUNDS</p> <p>8:00 p.m. — Greetings from B.C. Centennial Committee - Willard E. Ireland, Provincial Librarian and Archivist</p> <p>8:15 p.m. — Unveiling of Wolf Totem by “Miss Prince Rupert”</p> <p>8:30 p.m. — Presentation to Indian Councillors by Willard E. Ireland</p> <p>9:00 p.m. — Opening of Museum of Northern B. C. by Mr. Frank Anfield</p> <p>10:00 p.m. — Port Day Ball - Navy Drill Hall</p> <p>11:00 p.m. — FIREWORKS DISPLAY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p>Baseball Tournament will continue on Sunday, August 3rd.</p>

Figure 3: Potlatch Week Program. Prince Rupert City and Regional Archives, RG Large Fonds, 985-12, MS #480. Reprinted with Permission.

make this everyone’s celebration, including First Nations. The celebration attracted so many citizens and visitors from the surrounding areas that while the celebrations were a success, the tired and hot crowds, some inebriated, aggravated a “centennial riot,” which

only dispersed after the mayor was forced to read the Riot Act and there were subsequent arrests primarily of First Nations citizens.⁸⁹

The Committee also empowered local communities to take pride in their particular pasts. While it hoped communities would highlight their historical and cultural contributions in relation to a *provincial* past, it also recognized that in the spirit of democratic participation communities needed some freedom as to which pasts they wanted to celebrate. Since the writing and reproduction of history is a “meaning giving activity” where “individuals and societies can find their place and identity”⁹⁰ the Committee suggested that local committees fund local authors to write commemorative histories. As every other Committee suggestion was accompanied by literature, so too was this one. The thirty-page booklet, “So You Want to Write Your Community’s History,” which was co-authored by the Committee and the Provincial Archives, pointed out that communities should immediately start writing local histories since the centenary was raising interest in the past, and that “much of the local colour...dies with the pioneer.”⁹¹ To give further incentive for communities to start writing, the Central Committee produced radio and newspaper advertisements “in every newspaper in the province” inviting pioneers to write their local histories with “stories and anecdotes” which could then assist local communities with writing their histories.⁹² The production

⁸⁹ For a summary of the riot see Robert A. Campbell, “A ‘Fantastic Rigmarole’: Deregulating Aboriginal Drinking in British Columbia, 1945-1962,” *BC Studies* 141 (Spring 2004): 81-104.

⁹⁰ Chad Reimer, “The Making of British Columbia History: Historical Writing and Institutions, 1784-1958” (Ph.D. diss, York University, 1995), 7.

⁹¹ British Columbia Centennial Committee, *So You Want to Write Your Community’s History* (1957), 2.

⁹² BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 16, file: Histories, Local, D.J. Horan, Publicity Director memo to all Local Centennial Chairmen, 17 April 1957.

of local histories certainly was high on the Committee's priorities since it tried to compel communities to write their histories in such a manner.

Echoing the practice for other community projects, the Committee emphasized that every community in BC was equally entitled to write a local history, no matter size or age. "A town requires no hundred year record in order to have a history" the booklet reassured communities. For example, "Langley, a product of the fur trade era, and is over a hundred years old, but its history is not necessarily more exciting than the new Kitimat, a product of a new age, and Victoria's long and varied annals are not like those of Hope, Clinton or Pouce Coupe."⁹³

The effort at inclusion had the desired effect; local committees and amateur historians took up the challenge presented to them "exceed[ing] the fondest hopes of the Committee."⁹⁴ "One of the greatest bounties"⁹⁵ of the 1958 celebrations were the more than seventy histories written by local authors in Prince Rupert, New Westminster, Nanaimo, Vernon, Kamloops and many others, including two in the five year old municipality of Kitimat!⁹⁶ The more notable absences in the production of local histories were in the major cities of Vancouver and Victoria.⁹⁷ Local historians in the Okanagan were so busy writing, that the 1958 Report of the Okanagan Historical Society received

⁹³ *So You Want to Write Your Community's History*, 1.

⁹⁴ *Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee*, 138.

⁹⁵ *The Western Giant*, September 1958.

⁹⁶ Kitimat Chamber of Commerce, *Kitimat Today* (1958) and Pixie Meldrum, *Kitimat the First Five Years* (1958). Kitimat also received mention in two other publications: R.G. Large's *The Skeena: River of Destiny* and Stanley Rough's *Time and Place, Stories of Northern British Columbia*. Nina Napier, "British Columbia: A Bibliography of Centennial Publications, 1957-1959," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* (January-October 1957-58).

⁹⁷ Napier, "British Columbia: A Bibliography of Centennial Publications, 1957-1959," 200.

far fewer contributions than usual.⁹⁸ The production of so many histories was quite a feat considering the province offered no financial support to authors.

In the case of Prince Rupert, the local centennial committee chairman, Dr. R.G. Large authored a regional history expressly to write the North Coast into the province's history. Large, the son of a missionary-doctor, grew up on the Central Coast. After obtaining his medical training in Toronto, Large returned to BC and practiced on the North Coast, eventually settling in Prince Rupert where he became heavily involved in civic affairs. Prior to the publication of his *The Skeena: River of Destiny*, Large complained about the lack of North Coast representation in the *British Columbia Official Centennial Record*.⁹⁹ Thus, Large's foreword bluntly states, "this is an attempt to record the history of a portion of the Province of British Columbia which has been completely neglected by historians."¹⁰⁰ In correcting this oversight Large produced a model local history, which was awarded the American Association for State and Local History prize in 1958. Large's achievement validated the Committee's populist suggestion that one not need be a professional historian to write a local history; anyone willing to commit could do it.¹⁰¹ His book followed the Committee's suggested format on style, methodology and organization to the letter. It included a table of contents and footnotes and Large went to the trouble of including an index. *Skeena* was also recognized for sound methodology in

⁹⁸ *The 22nd Report of the Okanagan Historical Society*, (1958), 5.

⁹⁹ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 23, file: Prince Rupert, R.G. Large to L.J. Wallace, 20 December 1957.

¹⁰⁰ R.G. Large, *The Skeena: River of Destiny* (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1957), v.

¹⁰¹ *So You Want to Write Your Community's History*, 2.

using numerous local and provincial sources which had been “recorded and cross-checked from residents and archives.”¹⁰²

Reflecting dominant Euro-centric biases, that First Nations were transient caretakers of the land, the Committee recommended considering the role played by First Nations “before the first settlement” followed by an examination of the role of explorers, homesteaders and the first (white) communities.¹⁰³ *The Skeena: River of Destiny* and many other local histories followed this format, but in most cases examination of pre-contact history was cursory at best. Because “much has been written on the subject” of the “Skeena Indians,” Large dismissed them after fewer than four pages as a “primitive people” whose examination was needed only in so far as an ability “to appreciate the problems that confronted the early settlers and explorers.”¹⁰⁴ The book continued to follow the Committee’s format with lengthy examinations of exploration, white permanent settlements, transportation and railroads, industry, recreation and the period between the two world wars.¹⁰⁵ Large’s determination in correcting a historical disparity with a regional approach meant *Skeena* exceeded other local histories in length and breadth.

Large’s optimistic final chapter entitled “Destiny” chronicled the developments in the region since World War II including the installation of Columbia Cellulose’s pulpmill in Prince Rupert and Alcan’s Kitimat smelter. “Industry on a grand scale has come to stay,” he concluded the book, “it only requires men of vision, initiative and energy to

¹⁰² G.J. Butland, “North American Travel,” *The Geographic Journal*, 124 (September 1958): 400-401.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁰⁴ Large, *The Skeena*, 7.

¹⁰⁵ *So You Want to Write Your Community’s History*, 4.

make this the agricultural bread-basket of Northern British Columbia and Alaska.

Destiny calls the people of the Skeena! Destiny calls; and must not be denied!”¹⁰⁶

Other community histories followed the same recommended format. For instance, Patricia Johnson, M.A. and Nanaimo high school teacher, who wrote *A Short History of Nanaimo*, began with a chapter entitled “The Indians” recounting pre-contact Coast Salish life and an oral history as to how Nanaimo was named.¹⁰⁷ This matched the Committee’s advice to include “interesting Indian traditions and folklore.”¹⁰⁸ Johnson devoted the majority of the book to seminal events in Nanaimo’s economic history: the Hudson’s Bay Company, the coalmines and the Esquimalt & Nanaimo railway. Similarly, *Vernon, British Columbia: A Brief History* began with a hasty sketch of local First Nations as “the story of Vernon....would be incomplete without a record of the early native citizens,” although the book includes no further mention of the Okanagan.¹⁰⁹ After a fairly conventional description of the “discovery” of British Columbia and its subsequent colonial status, *Vernon* recounted the early preemptions in the valley for cattle ranching and orchards. The book blindly followed the Committee’s suggested chapter breakdown, even going so far as entitling a chapter detailing Vernon’s municipal developments “1914-1939,” although it barely mentioned the impact of the wars.

¹⁰⁶ Large, *The Skeena*, 172.

¹⁰⁷ Patricia Johnson, *A Short History of Nanaimo* (Vancouver: Evergreen Press, 1958), 3.

¹⁰⁸ *So You Want to Write Your Community’s History*, 4.

¹⁰⁹ Theresa Gabriel, *Vernon, British Columbia: A Brief History* (Vernon BC, 1958), 9.

While *Skeena* was a critical success, the other histories did not receive the same accolades. The Nanaimo committee regretted that its limited funds yielded an effort that was not as “ambitious” as its local committee wished.¹¹⁰

Nevertheless, by enhancing the knowledge of, and pride in, local communities these histories were greatly welcomed as contributions to the historiography of the province. For instance, in 1958 the Vancouver Library requested twelve copies of each local history produced.¹¹¹ The Centennial Committee also notified all local committees to forward two copies, along with invoices, to the Provincial Archives for posterity.¹¹² Perhaps feeling that the writing of local history would be self-sustaining, the Committee put no emphasis on the production of local histories in 1966/67 or 1971, but many communities that had not, or were not organized enough to write local histories in 1958 often did so then. In some cases, the histories published in 1966/67 and 1971, had their genesis with the 1958 centennial. The Errington centennial committee began to compile its history in 1958, but the ten-year absence of author S.C.W. Stokes stalled the completion of *Errington: Vancouver Island* but it was ready for the 1971 celebrations. This history skips mention of First Nations altogether and does not follow the 1958 recommendations in its “subjective approach” with “odd bits and pieces and all.”¹¹³

The 1958 Centennial Committee also encouraged pride in local history and provincial history through the schools. Through the Department of Education, the

¹¹⁰ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 16, file: Histories, Local, George Molecey to L.J. Wallace, 4 June 1958.

¹¹¹ *British Columbia Centennial Committee Newsletter*, undated.

¹¹² BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 16, file: Histories, Local, British Columbia Centennial Committee Circular #56, undated.

¹¹³ S.C.W. Stokes, *Errington: Vancouver Island* (Courtenay BC: E.W. Bickle), i, and Ketha Adams, “Review: Errington, Vancouver Island” *BC Historical News* 5:1 (November 1971), 14.

Committee called on teachers to integrate local history in an overall history of the province. The department sent out suggested lessons for primary, intermediate and secondary grades “to interest the pupils in the story of British Columbia.” The study of the local community was “strongly recommended” and teachers were expected to “make frequent references to the local area or will conclude the unit with a study of the community.”¹¹⁴ Therefore, the individual character and accomplishments of each BC community would meld seamlessly with the provincial past providing citizens, despite their locale, with a sense of pride and belonging.

The Committee often repeated that the celebrations were meant for everyone so even limited identities were to be subsumed within the tale of British Columbia’s remarkable progress as naturalization allows that “one could be invited into the imagined community.”¹¹⁵ The 1958 Ethnic Groups and Provincial Organizations Subcommittee recommended “integration,” to tie in “special celebrations ...planned for ethnic groups... with the overall Centennial picture by a speaker or a visual presentation on the general history and growth of British Columbia and/or of your community.” Further, ethnic groups should “learn more about British Columbia” and therefore should be provided “with general information about the province, its growth, history and development and future possibilities and opportunities.”¹¹⁶ The 1958 Committee relied on local committees to welcome and integrate British Columbia’s ethnicities. It decided that, like the local histories, it would not fund any group’s history, but it did support the

¹¹⁴ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 8, file: Educational Activities Subcommittee, “Teaching Programme for the Centennial,” 1957.

¹¹⁵ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 45.

¹¹⁶ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 11, file: Newsletters, Ethnic Groups and Provincial Organization Subcommittee newsletter, undated.

publication of *Ethnic Groups in British Columbia: a Selected Bibliography*, so as to encourage further writing.¹¹⁷

The 1971 centennial coincided with greater acceptance of the pluralism and multiculturalism of Canada. The 1971 Committee financially supported the Ethnic Organization Subcommittee's desire to write the history of ethnic groups in BC. The result was *Strangers Entertained: A History of the Ethnic Groups of British Columbia*, edited by John Norris, a historian at the University of British Columbia and the descendant of a pioneer family. In most cases, chapters were written by ethnic organizations or by individual representatives, but John Norris himself wrote the chapter on "Native Indians" and two graduate students wrote several chapters and prepared additional information for others. The publication allowed "each ethnic community to become aware of its role while at the same time placing the record of its history before the public, and integrating that history into the overall history of British Columbia."¹¹⁸ This approach echoed a similar emphasis on equality as the production of local histories in 1958. Each ethnic community had an equal claim at inclusion in BC's history; their stories provided "a binding sense of common development because, though all the groups are a little different from one another, yet all are part of a common experience."¹¹⁹ In the foreword to *Strangers*, L.J. Wallace credits ethnic communities for creating British

¹¹⁷ Ibid., Box 1, file: Publications Subcommittee, W.E. Ireland to Arni Arnasen, 3 December 1957.

¹¹⁸ *The Celebration of the Century 1871-1971*, 36.

¹¹⁹ John Norris, *Strangers Entertained: A History of the Ethnic Groups of British Columbia* (Vancouver: Evergreen Press, 1971), 244.

Columbia's "many-sided community" and cites the book for "a modest beginning" to a "new kind of multiple history of British Columbia."¹²⁰

While the book was a beginning to a greater understanding of ethnicity in the province, it tended to replicate many of the stereotypes that it was trying to overcome.¹²¹ For instance, the organization of the book mirrored the ethnic pecking order of early BC and Canada, with the first two-thirds devoted to Britons, Europeans, Americans and French Canadians, while the last one-third covered people of colour, with "Negroes" coming dead last, despite the presence of very early Black communities in the province. In reviewing it, Howard Palmer, a historian at the University of Calgary, criticized *Strangers* on this segregation, since a chronological and contextual perspective was lost. He also admitted that *Strangers'* optimism for ethnic harmony was undermined by the negative reaction to it by some ethnic groups, like the Doukhobors who objected to their backwards portrayal.¹²² After publication, the author of that particular chapter, W.N. Papove, wrote the Ethnic Organization Subcommittee with his "profound shock" at the editing of his original contribution which led to sensationalizing by "all too frequent lumping of extremist activities with the mainstream of the Doukhobor social movement."¹²³ Another ethnic organization, the Alpha Omega Ukrainian Varsity Club, refused a request to sell the book on the grounds that it "is no more than the typical

¹²⁰ Ibid., i.

¹²¹ The book's treatment of First Nations is discussed in Chapter Five.

¹²² Howard Palmer, "Review: Strangers Entertained: A History of Ethnic Groups in British Columbia," *Canadian Historical Review* 55 (March 1974), 96.

¹²³ BCA, BCC '71 Committee, GR-1450, Box 7, file: Ethnic Organizations, W.N. Papove to Walter C. Koerner, Chairman Ethnic Organization Subcommittee, 28 February 1972.

tokenism which is accorded minority ethnic groups in any other of the many centenaries which we have been celebrating since 1958.”¹²⁴

Doukhobors also took exception to another publication. The 1971 Centennial Committee published *It Happened in British Columbia*, a pictorial review of the province’s first hundred years in Confederation with a minimum of text.¹²⁵ The brief text consisted of BC historical vignettes illustrated with relevant photographs. Since the Committee wanted to demonstrate the province’s multiculturalism, one of the vignettes was about the religious community of the Doukhobors and the “woes” it occasionally brought to the province due to its feuds “against authority as well as among themselves.”¹²⁶ Unfortunately, not only did the Committee choose to “highlight and sensationalize...a minor aspect of Doukhobor life”¹²⁷ it mislabeled a picture, mistaking a Son of Freedom for an Orthodox leader.¹²⁸ Wallace was quick to offer an apology for the mix-up, but did not issue a public apology as some Doukhobors requested.¹²⁹ Despite this controversy, it is clear that the Committee tried to highlight the contributions of

¹²⁴ Ibid., Barbara Mysko, President Alpha Omega Ukrainian Varsity Club to R.H. Gillespie, 8 November 1971.

¹²⁵ *The Celebration of the Century 1871-1971: The Report of the British Columbia Centennial '71 Committee*, 43.

¹²⁶ BCA, BCC '71 Committee, *It Happened in British Columbia* (Vancouver: Evergreen Press, 1970), 127.

¹²⁷ Letter to the editor, *Vancouver Sun*, 13 August 1971.

¹²⁸ BCA, British Columbia Centennial '71 Committee, GR-1450, Box 7, file: Ethnic Organizations, Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ to L.J. Wallace, 8 June 1971.

¹²⁹ Ibid., L.J. Wallace to Larry Swettikoff, 16 September 1971 and Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ to L.J. Wallace, 8 June 1971 and Fred Sherstolittoff et al to L.J. Wallace, 14 October 1971.

ethnic groups in the province's history, thereby building on the foundations of 1958 by making this a more inclusive celebration.¹³⁰

By and large, the Committee's invitations to communities to join in the celebrations and take pride in their communities were welcomed, particularly in 1958. The three main figures of BC's centennials, L.J. Wallace, Ray Williston and Wesley Black fondly remembered them as a rallying point for individual communities to celebrate and take pride in themselves, and in so doing unite the province. Furthermore, the government was particularly pleased that this celebration was provincial in nature with large municipalities and small villages making an equal effort with respect to their populations. In a 1981 interview, Wallace returned again and again to this point. With reference to the commemorative projects, he was particularly proud that "throughout the province...many museums...libraries and all these projects which had historic significance, which are not only in Victoria and Vancouver."¹³¹ Williston, who represented Fort George in the legislature, echoed those sentiments and congratulated the Committee for "taking the centennial right back to the grass roots of every community that was in the province, not having one or two grandiose celebrations in one or two centers...It got more people involved in a historic sense that had every been done before and I don't think that any other part of Canada has been able to match that record."¹³² Likewise, Black, the MLA for Nelson-Creston, commended the centennials' effect on

¹³⁰ This criticism fits with a general apathy and scorn towards the 1971 centennial. See Chapter Six.

¹³¹ BCA, PABCIC, T3835, 5-2, 1, transcript L.J. Wallace interviewed by Derek Reimer, 19 May 1981.

¹³² *Ibid.*, T1375, 8-2, 16, transcript, R.G. Williston interviewed by Derek Reimer, 7 October 1975.

British Columbians' sense of their own identity because "people became enthusiastic about the province...[and] very British Columbia conscious."¹³³

Such success did not come without meticulous planning on the part of the Centennial Committee. As this chapter has demonstrated, the Committee garnered community participation through financial incentives for community infrastructure and through encouraging grassroots celebrations, pride campaigns and local histories. It felt some community autonomy was necessary lest they not celebrate at all, and it encouraged unique local celebrations and local histories. However, since so much was riding on the celebrations, the Committee needed to maintain a semblance of harmony to local celebrations and initiatives. In anticipation of phenomenal industrial and population growth, the per capita grant system for permanent commemorative projects, aided in enhancing communities' attractiveness and number of amenities. Through its vetting process, the Committee could stop any second-rate projects. The populist nature of the government, and its desire for re-election, resulted in equitable treatment in the grant system, the traveling shows, and support of local committees. The overriding objective of provincial unity resulted in identical traveling entertainments and simultaneity in decorations and the day of prayer. Local communities celebrated their individual histories as contributions to a provincial history. The care local authors in Prince Rupert, Vernon and Nanaimo took in tailoring their histories to the recommendations of the Committee, and the enthusiasm that local organizers put into year-round celebrations, mirroring provincial celebrations, attest to the Centennial Committee's success. The Committee's aim of rallying British Columbians and thereby creating a provincial identity was also

¹³³ Ibid., T1410, 7-1, 3, transcript W. Black, interviewed by W.J. Langlois, 1977-78.

present in popular province-wide touring historical re-creations, as is examined in the next chapter.

**Chapter Four:
“Hundred Years of Progress”: Constructing a
Daring Past to an Expansive Future**

The official purpose of any anniversary or centenary is to call forth, reflect on, and celebrate the past. British Columbia’s three centenaries certainly met this objective. Locally, British Columbians produced community histories, parades and pageants, museums and school events. Provincially, the government and the Centennial Committee reconstructed historic sites, erected point-of-interest signs, and commissioned a provincial history.¹ However, the Committee worried that these traditional commemorations and permanent projects would not ignite the sort of exuberant celebration it desired. The 1958 centennial and its successors were billed as being major parties for the public, therefore, the Committee had to find popular re-creations and motifs to mesh with this theme. Popular motifs – that were fun and easily recognizable – by drawing the most attendance would help meet the Committee’s objective of full participation and tourism revenue. Another important consideration was to stage province-wide events in such a way as to unify different regions, or at least mitigate regional animosities. Furthermore, widespread and popular participation promised dissemination of government’s hegemonic narrative of progress. But which aspects of the province’s vast history would deliver? The answer lay in one traditional interpretation and in one new one.

From the earliest writings on British Columbia’s history, authors emphasized the rugged individualism of European pioneers who conquered the formidable wilderness for

¹ Chad Reimer discusses the production of Margaret Ormsby’s *British Columbia: A History* in his dissertation, “The Making of British Columbia History: Historical Writing and Institutions, 1784-1958” (Ph.D. diss, York University, 1995).

the sake of progress and material abundance. At the forefront of this narrative was the strength and ingenuity of fur traders, gold seekers and other pioneer-heroes in traversing the challenging landscape of the province to reveal the riches within. Prior to the Great War, BC's historians drew on the "human activity" of George Vancouver, Alexander Mackenzie and multitudes of anonymous traders and prospectors who "released the wealth of the world, created moral communities and illustrated the truth that the individual was the master of his fate" to illustrate the character of the province.²

Exploration, transportation and travel were highlighted in historical works because they transcended BC's difficult topography where regions were, for the most part, isolated from each other. Thus, early historians stressed "the importance of transportation.... for provincial unity and prosperity depended on the physical links that bound it together."³

This interpretation was carried on in the 1958 centennial by the recreation of Simon Fraser's 1808 journey on its 150th anniversary and a stagecoach run which retold the story of the gold rush-era Yale-Barkerville Stage. Just like the touring entertainments discussed in the previous chapter, these long-distance journeys met the Committee's desire for projects that would reach the majority of the vast province's population. In fact, the Committee rejected the idea of recreating the imperial proclamation at Fort Langley under which British Columbia had become a crown colony because too few people could fit inside the stockade at the newly restored Fort to justify the expense.⁴ No

² Allan Smith, "The Writing of British Columbia History," in *British Columbia: Historical Readings* eds, W. Peter Ward and Robert A.J. McDonald (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1981): 5-34.

³ Reimer, "The Making of British Columbia History," 10.

⁴ British Columbia Archives (hereafter BCA), British Columbia Centennial '58 Committee (hereafter BCC '58 Committee), GR-1448, Box 2, File: Publicity Releases, Projects etc, Report on the Fraser Brigade, 28 May 1958.

doubt, the Committee was also aware that launching a reverential recreation at Fort Langley – the self-proclaimed “birthplace of BC” - would draw the ire of Vancouver Islanders and other regions. Furthermore, a legalistic presentation by dull colonial authorities would hardly fit the promised “party” atmosphere. Thus, the Committee presented the daring exploits of the much livelier historical characters – explorers, fur traders, and miners – whose tales were familiar to British Columbians who would welcome their retelling.

Yet, the Committee went beyond traditional emphases in provincial history by enlivening the celebrations with Hollywood-style Wild West motifs. This approach sharply contrasted with an earlier consensus of BC’s history that had distinguished the province from the violence, lawlessness and vigilantism of the American west.⁵ Nevertheless, the 1958 Centennial Committee relished it. Surely, choosing a cartoon miner as a mascot, sponsoring “old west” beard-growing contests, and producing the provincial stagecoach tour, were motivated by the increasing importance of popular American culture through such television and motion picture westerns as *Gunsmoke* and Hollywood’s *Gunfight at the OK Corral* and the craze for all things Davy Crockett.⁶ The mass appeal of this imagery was virtually guaranteed to draw both British Columbians and tourists to such events. Moreover, the North American public was becoming acclimatized to such popular references. Disneyland had opened in 1955 to great acclaim and popularity. In the Brussels Universal Exposition in 1958 (the first major exposition since the end of the Second World War) the United States made popular culture its

⁵ Reimer, “The Making of British Columbia History,” 9, and Smith, “The Writing of British Columbia History,” 8.

⁶ See Doug Owsram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 90-96.

feature after the Soviet pavilion usurped the theme of military technology by displaying a model of the recently launched satellite Sputnik.⁷ The popularity of the western figured into the polarizing tendencies of the Cold War as well. Cultural historian Richard Slotkin notes that the cold war “inaugurated the golden age of the western,” as it was a site where Americans could sort out this new international system.⁸ Like Hollywood westerns, the BC Centennial Committee celebrated the spirit of ingenuity, resourcefulness and populism in its western motifs. Finally and ironically, presenting such a constructed, mythologized past allowed the Committee to dodge accusations of privileging one region’s past over another’s, thereby uniting the province through a popular western culture.

The Committee may have been keenly sensitive to region in staging its projects but the choices themselves reveal little evidence of inclusiveness. At this time, the master narrative of Canada produced and communicated in the public domain, was the arrival of non-Native explorers and settlers.⁹ Mascot Centennial Sam, the beard growing contests, the Stagecoach and the Fraser runs reinforced the continual drive to imagine or make British Columbia a “white man’s province.”¹⁰ The colonial era of British Columbia

⁷ Robert Rydell et al, *Fair America: World’s Fairs in the United States* (Washington: Smithsonian Institute, 2000), 100.

⁸ Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: the Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth Century America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1998), 347.

⁹ Elizabeth Furniss, “Pioneers, Progress and the Myth of the Frontier: The Landscape of Public History in Rural British Columbia,” *BC Studies* 115/116 (Autumn/Winter 1997/1998), 7-8.

¹⁰ Patricia Roy popularized this term in the context of White-Asian relations, but Adele Perry also uses the term in exploring BC’s ‘reform movement’ in the colonial period. Patricia Roy, *A White Man’s Province: BC Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1989) and Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001).

that the Committee harkened back to, was, as Adele Perry deftly reminds us, a deeply plural society, where First Nations remained the majority of the population until the 1880s. However, like earlier historical work and images, the Centennial Committee adhered to the fiction of a white settler province perhaps “not because it accurately describes our history, but because it implicitly serves white interests and salves white consciousness,”¹¹ and rationalized present social institutions and authority.¹² Further, the fiction of a rough and masculine settler society served other purposes. Modernism in the mid-twentieth century had contradictory effects on male gender ideals. While the confidence in modernism’s technology, rationality and male expertise bolstered white men’s importance, it also had the opposite effect of alienating men from a supposedly primal form of masculinity.¹³ Centennial events and motifs offered white male residents a release from the detrimental effects of modernism. They also provided an alternative model of the sort of man that exploited the province’s resources, and would do so again in the future. Such hearty masculine men as embodied by Century Sam et al. were ripe to challenge BC’s rough landscape and, in this period, international foes who threatened the free enterprise ideals of this government.

This chapter deals primarily with the celebrations of 1958. At the time the Committee thought this would be a one-off event, therefore it undertook more elaborate historical recreations than in the following centennials. Also, as Chapter Five and Six will detail, the two later celebrations coincided with social movements and a new ethos in the province that rendered such recreations old-fashioned and politically risky. But for

¹¹ Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, 201.

¹² Furniss, “Pioneers, Progress and the Myth of the Frontier,” 9.

¹³ See Chris Dummitt, *The Manly Modern: Masculinity in Postwar Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 5-7.

1958, the Committee saw the historical themes and traveling recreations as essential to its wider project of provincial harmony, and the exultation and edification of BC's pioneer history. In all its re-creations the Committee tried to ape conventional narrative; however, the overall directive for provincial unity and the democratic participation accorded to communities complicated this goal, leading to some confusion and controversy. The Fraser Brigade and the Stagecoach run were loosely based on historical narrative, but the manner in which they were staged said more about contemporary worldviews and goals.

Perhaps the most widely disseminated centennial image in 1958 was its mascot, Century Sam. Although only a symbol for the celebrations, Century Sam warrants further scrutiny as he embodied a spirit that the organizers hoped would infect the populace during the centennial year. He was a fun mascot, reminiscent of Bugs Bunny's pistol-packing foil, Yosemite Sam, and even shared his surname. He was also reminiscent of characters from Disneyland, which had opened just a year before Sam's creation. As such, Sam was so historically generic that little about him was representative of British Columbia; in fact, he would have been equally suitable for any celebration or theme park in western North America. However, this very fictional and generic quality allowed Sam to transcend the multiple histories in the province. His depiction as a stereotypical gold miner from the "Old West" also affirmed the same "values of individualism, self-reliance and the democratic impulse"¹⁴ that were predominant in other western manifestations, like film, and which the Committee felt represented British Columbia.

¹⁴ David Hamilton Murdoch, *The American West: The Invention of a Myth* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2001), ix.

Century Sam was conceived early in centennial preparations as the Board of Directors felt a mascot could tie the province-wide celebrations together. Its chairman, L.J. Wallace, came up with the idea of Sam, who was then given life on paper by cartoonist Robert Banks. There is no evidence suggesting that any other figure was considered for the mascot because Sam seemed to be a perfect spokesman for the centennial. While the other directors recognized the value of having such a mascot, who, although fictional, represented the common man in gold rush history that would likely encourage popular participation in the centennial, UBC Classics professor Malcolm McGregor vigorously objected to the choice of such a coarse symbol for the centennial. Another director later recalled: “This to Malcolm McGregor was the ultimate of insults.”¹⁵

Nevertheless in 1956 Sam was revealed to the world along with an appropriate western mythology to explain the character to British Columbians. “A pixy-like little old man hobbled out of the hills today and announced to a startled world that he was a left over of the big BC gold rush one hundred years ago,” the announcement read. “His memories of the last century, his ‘wonderment’ at the advances of the country since he hibernated, will be a big part of the Centennial Colour which is soon to be splashed around the globe.”¹⁶ In subsequent publications, the Centennial Committee embellished the legend of Century Sam; despite his happy-go-lucky appearance, he was “so tough that

¹⁵ BCA, Provincial Archives of British Columbia Interview Collection, 1974-1987 (hereafter PABCIC), T1375, 8-2, 16, transcript, R.G. Williston interviewed by Derek Reimer, 7 October 1975.

¹⁶ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 10, File: Century Sam Project, British Columbia Centennial Committee News Release, undated.

when he was bitten by a rattlesnake Sam bit right back.”¹⁷ Here was a resilient character, unlikely to stand down when challenged, yet refined enough to recognize and celebrate the achievements of modern British Columbia.

Not only did Sam appear in official Centennial literature, the Committee also granted permission to businesses and organizations to reproduce him on pamphlets and merchandise. The whole province became awash with Sam tie-ins. Sam became “very popular,” L.J. Wallace recalled. “This was a symbol that could be used in many ways.”¹⁸ For instance, retail stores set up window and counter displays using Century Sam’s visage, and he even became the spokesman for the Lucky Lager Breweries’ Phoenix Centennial Beer. Leading a donkey burdened with two gigantic cases of Centennial Beer, Sam entreats presumably white male readers, “I’ve got mine – How about you?”¹⁹ First Nations were still denied the right to purchase liquor at BC government liquor stores in 1958.²⁰ Century Sam was also popular with imitators. Many live re-enactments of the mascot added to festivities such as parades and other events. The Committee particularly singled out Alderman Sid Williams of Courtenay for his excellent portrayal which “enhanced the birthday spirit.”²¹ Williams had such enthusiasm for playing Sam, that a

¹⁷ City of Vancouver Archives (hereafter CVA), British Columbia Centennial Committee fonds, MSS 178, vol. 1, file 7, British Columbia Centennial Committee Newsletter, February 1957.

¹⁸ BCA, PABCIC, T3835, 5-2, 1, transcript L.J. Wallace interviewed by Derek Reimer, 19 May 1981.

¹⁹ *Vancouver Province*, 14 July 1958.

²⁰ Robert A. Campbell, “A Fantastic Rigmarole”: Deregulating Aboriginal Drinking in British Columbia, 1945-62,” *BC Studies* 141 (Spring 2004), 94.

²¹ British Columbia Centennial Committee, *The Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee* (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1959), 219.

lake at the headwaters of Comox Creek, near where he had a small gold claim, was named Century Sam Lake in his honour.²²

What are we to make of this pint-sized centennial juggernaut? A careful reading of the original news release gives us some clues. While it announced that Sam would help publicize the centennial “in London, Paris, Rome and New York” he would, at the same time, become “familiar in Prince Rupert, Penticton, the Peace River Country, the Queen Charlottes, in the *Big Cities* and the *Pumpkin Corners*.”²³ This generic symbol, a fictional gold miner who woke up after one hundred years to help celebrate the centenary, was so constructed that no region in the province could claim a particular affinity with him, to the exclusion of others. Thus, he was to become a unifying force, a “rallying figure for everyone.”²⁴ “Sam’s as real as patriotism,” the release continued, “you can see a bit of him in everyone who calls this province home – and the twinkle of his eyes is transported to foreign places with everyone who visits here.”²⁵ This was a carefully considered mascot; one who was to have a central role in selling the centenary to both British Columbians and outside tourists.

At the outset Sam set the populist and frontier tone for the celebrations; the Fraser Brigade and the Stagecoach run reinforced it. The re-creation of Simon Fraser’s 1808 descent down the river that bears his name demonstrated the Committee’s adherence to the dominant interpretation of provincial history. However, the re-creation illustrated

²² G.P.V. and Helen B Akrigg, *British Columbia Place Names* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 42.

²³ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 10 file: Century Sam Project, British Columbia Centennial Committee News Release, undated, emphasis added.

²⁴ *Victoria Daily Colonist*, 4 October 1956.

²⁵ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 10 file: Century Sam Project, British Columbia Centennial Committee News Release, undated.

that the same virtues that Sam possessed – individualism, heroism and conquest of landscape – were represented here also. The project advanced a common history based on the daring of the province’s founders in which to draw a corollary to the present. The river was an early highway, and the Fraser descent illustrated the centrality of transportation in the past and present.

Committee Chairman Wallace researched and developed the idea; he reasoned that Fraser’s discoveries opened the route to gold seekers and ultimately provided the main impetus for the creation of the colony of British Columbia.²⁶ This project would also appeal to the hinterlands as it would reinforce their centrality in the province’s history, and the hope for the future. Northerners certainly upheld this continuity; one Chamber of Commerce wrote, “now that the Northern part of the Province is developing at such a rapid pace it would seem a good idea to remind the public that the so-called ‘hinterland’ was actually the first part of the Province to be discovered in the search for the Western Ocean.”²⁷ The Committee commissioned Gordon Hilker, a well-known pageant producer, to develop the re-creation.

It was a lucky coincidence that the 150th anniversary of Fraser’s voyage fell on the centenary of what the government deemed to be British Columbia’s birthday. While Hilker strove to make the brigade as authentic as possible, the nature of the project necessitated that it stop at small and large communities along the way. Like all the other

²⁶ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 2, File: Publicity Releases, Projects etc, Report on The Fraser Brigade, 28 May 1958.

²⁷ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 9, file: Historic Sites and Publications Subcommittee, Miss V.D. Phillips, Secretary, Dawson Creek Chamber of Commerce to Premier W.A.C. Bennett, 26 April 1956.

traveling exhibits the Committee sponsored,²⁸ local centennial committees were to welcome and celebrate the brigade as they saw fit in the spirit of democratic participation. Since many Fraser River settler communities were only established at the time of the gold rush, they naturally wanted to celebrate these origins with the fanfare of the brigade's arrival. The result was a cacophony of historical eras to say the least, as the local committees were instructed to act out what happened to "their river and the surrounding country since the canoes had first landed there a hundred and fifty years before."²⁹

Hilker's task in realizing Wallace's vision of the project was not an easy one. The success of the project relied on finding experienced men capable of guiding the brigade through the treacherous waters of the Fraser. Hilker's original idea, to have professional actors both perform and paddle, was quickly abandoned. Instead professional rivermen were hired to bring the brigade down safely from its starting point at Prince George (fur-trade era Fort George), and local committees would have to sort out the performances for the brigade's arrival. He did not totally abandon his producer's eye; the Brigade Captain he hired from Prince George was in his words, "Tall, lean, with laughter-wrinkled eyes[;] Dick Corless was a TV director's dream of a riverman, which, in fact, he is and has been for twenty-five years on the Parsnip, the Peace, the Crooked Rivers. His business: Freighting and guiding into the Arctic Rim." Corless led a team of eighteen men in three

²⁸ See Chapter Three.

²⁹ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 2, File: Publicity Releases, Projects etc, Report on The Fraser Brigade, 28 May 1958.

canoes down the river including two First Nations men, as “Fraser carried two Indians as guides and hunters and so did we.”³⁰

Once the paddling crew was in place, Hilker had to find the appropriate equipment. The Native Sons of BC, who were interested in how the brigade was to be carried out, urged the Committee to use boats built by “a native son” and suggested a small British Columbian firm do the work. Hilker instead entered into a contract with the Hudson’s Bay Company to supply Peterborough canoes with modifications simulating birch bark canoes.³¹ The Hudson’s Bay Company in 1957 saw an opportunity to capitalize on its fur trade origins by garnering free publicity. It researched the clothing worn by company men during Fraser’s time and supplied the brigade with antique woolen material for their costumes which were sewn in Winnipeg.³²

Crew arrangements and the Hudson Bay Company’s preparations came about easily, but Hilker needed representation from the First Nations community to give the brigade authenticity. As is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five, many BC First Nations did not welcome the idea of a provincial celebration commemorating colonization. Their boycott of this project would wreak havoc with all the Committee’s plans, particularly the Fraser Brigade, as it strove to have twenty, fifty-foot war canoes participate in the spectacle at the lower reaches of the river. Despite widespread opposition to the centennial reported in the press, Hilker was relieved when meetings with various First Nations yielded authentic canoes. “Indian reaction is good,” he

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Fraser was employed by the Northwest Company but 13 years after his voyage, in 1821, the company merged with the Hudson’s Bay Company.

³² BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 2, File: Publicity Releases, Projects etc, Report on The Fraser Brigade, 28 May 1958.

reported back to Wallace “The anti-centennial talk has apparently not cut through to the rank and file.”³³ Within two months Hilker garnered commitments for the participation of seven canoes, but complained about the slow negotiation process since “most canoes, in being handed down from the older generation, have passed into joint ownership of several sons, or, in several cases, have been sold to syndicates of young Indians.”³⁴ To ensure a commitment, Hilker “found to be essential” a letter signed by the Premier and Lieutenant Governor “to ensure as much as possible the continuity of the Indian pledge to participate.”³⁵ By the end of his negotiations he had enough fifty-foot canoes to proceed.

Hilker, like other centennial organizers, worked to have First Nations participate in officially sanctioned ways. In positing the province as founded by white explorers and settlers, the Committee did not need to erase the role of First Nations in Fraser’s journey, but it did not want Native individuals to upstage the European explorer. To this end, a First Nations presence was desired on the water to maintain a sense of accuracy, but Hilker was not disposed toward having a First Nations presence on shore and “arranged no ‘on foot’ Indian participation” in the spectacle. Further, he wanted no interruption to the illusion that the viewers from the shore were somehow watching a scene from the past. Although the families of the Native men on the water wanted to take part and follow the canoe crews, he told the Committee’s executive secretary that “we are going to

³³ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 15, file: Fraser Saga, Gordon Hilker to Lawrence Wallace, 9 August 1957.

³⁴ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 15, file: Fraser Saga, Interim Report – Fraser Brigade, 31 October 1957.

³⁵ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 15, file: Fraser Brigade, Gordon Hilker to Larry McCance, Executive Secretary, 6 December 1957.

do everything we can to keep them in the background and, of course, not use them officially at all.”³⁶

In other aspects of the spectacle, Hilker did not insist on maintaining a sense of past-ness, particularly when contemporary comparisons could be made. In a sequence entitled “Man against the River,” kayakers from all over North America and Europe left from Prince George a few days before the re-enactment to “show modern skills and daring in contrast to the historical venture.”³⁷ These kayakers then met the brigade at the finale at Kitsilano Beach in Vancouver.

Since local communities were to incorporate the brigade into their celebrations, Hilker could not control local events on shore. However, as a pageant producer, Hilker planned a bit of pageantry for each stop-over. He hired a playwright to draft a basic framework of the history of the Fraser River and professional actors who followed the brigade by road. When they arrived at designated communities, local committees and actors embellished the play according to their unique circumstances.³⁸

One of the most interesting performances was the inaugural one. In Prince George, the performance was prophetically called “Break Through in the North.” The local and Central Committee designed a spectacle that celebrated elements of Fraser’s voyage, the gold rush, and the current state of industry in the North. Exactly 150 years to the day that Fraser and his crew departed on 28 May 1808, some 7000 townspeople gathered at the newly established Fort George Park, the city’s centennial project, which was also at the site of the original Northwest company trading fort. The ensuing

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 2, File: Publicity Releases, Projects etc, Report on The Fraser Brigade, 28 May 1958.

³⁸ Ibid.

festivities included a barbeque and presentations. For instance, Mayor Carrie Jane Grey presented a beaver pelt to Chairman Wallace for the Brigade to transport on their journey to the coast, and MLA Ray Williston crowned a local woman, Lynne Alexander, Aurora I Queen of the Evergreens.³⁹ Shortly thereafter, Dick Corless and his crew paraded into the park and settled down with the thousands of gathered citizens to watch a local presentations and the commissioned play.

“My dear subjects – as your Centennial Queen, it is my privilege and duty to extend your greeting to the Fraser Brigade,” the newly crowned Queen Aurora began the presentation, “and to command your enjoyment of tonight’s celebration of our one hundred years of progress. We all know that it was in our beloved Prince George that the adventure of British Columbia began. It is fitting that the re-creation of our story should also start here this evening. Now, let the performance begin.”⁴⁰ So began the Fraser re-creation suited to the local community’s desire to celebrate itself as the birthplace of BC.

Before the canoeists took to the water, the first run of Hilker’s play took place. The play that evening was discordant because of the desire to mesh the Gold Rush history of 1858 with that of earlier exploration history. Added to this was the necessity to celebrate the dynamic present. The play, as the Committee conceived of it, “of course, ends up with the future role of the ancient fort as the supply base for the great development in the north;” thus reinforcing the corollary of past and present.⁴¹ At one point in the play, the variety of time periods included in the celebration had to be

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 15 file: Fraser Saga, Final Script, undated.

⁴¹ Ibid., Interim Report – Fraser Brigade, 31 October 1957.

explained. One character, a Royal Engineer, sent to maintain law and order, told the commentator that at one time the only piano in BC was the one that they brought.

“Yep,” he says “when the Royal Engineers came to this colony – oops! Pardon me – this province – of course, we brought all the latest equipment with us. So when they asked me back for this Centenary, I thought I’d show you we’re still right up to date....

COMMENTATOR: that’s mixing your periods, isn’t it? I mean historical accuracy....

CHARLIE: Oh, we’re really going to mix ‘em tonight (EXPLAINS PATIENTLY) I was here in 1858...you’re here in 1958...but we’re taking you back to 1858...in fact right back to 1808...that’s when Simon Fraser was here, 1808, right here in Fort George...”

At the conclusion of the play, the audience was yanked into present day, with a display of “construction and industrial machinery...manned by the actual workers of the North.”

And on the nearby Canadian National Railway Bridge, visible to the gathering, local railway workers demonstrated equipment from Pacific Great Eastern and CNR, backlit by a fireworks display.⁴²

Following this dizzying amalgam of periods, the brigade marched across the stage to the river with their canoes. Then, dramatically,

A bowman shot a flaming arrow into the air; a command barked out and the canoes swung into the great river. The French Canadian songs and the Cariboo Chorus floated over the water as the crews lifted their paddles in salute, the arcs picking them up in the high, fast-running water. One hundred magenta flares, released from boats high above in the river exploded into flames and coloring light as a special gang signaled by the flaming arrow ignited a great fireworks display. As the canoes faded from

⁴² Ibid.

sight around a bend in the river, in the circle of their dimming flares, the fireworks gave one final brilliant display. The adventure had begun.⁴³

From its inception at Prince George, the re-creation stopped at Quesnel, Soda Creek, Lillooet, Lytton, Boston Bar, Yale, Hope, Mission, Fort Langley, New Westminster and Vancouver. By a fortuitous coincidence, the performances at these locations landed either on a Friday or Saturday evening, prompting Hilker to gush, “Fraser could not have planned his trip better if he had known about the celebrations a century and a half ahead.”⁴⁴

For Gordon Hilker himself, this production was a success that helped launch his long production career.⁴⁵ In his final report to the Committee, he expressed his exuberance at the unifying effect of the production by recalling the stop at Soda Creek:

Eight or nine hundred people had been slowly slithering their cars down the muddy one-way road for the past two hours. Now, away from the chromium they looked very much a part of that ragged wilderness as they clustered by the river, peering upstream. Suddenly, the Brigade was spotted. For, perhaps, two minutes no one said anything. The canoes and men were so tiny in the great swollen river, so small against the walls of rock. Often their swift approach could not be followed clearly for it was like a page from Fraser’s Journal; pouring rain, heavy mist, skies crowding down on the deep canyon; the river dark, muddy gray. This was Simon Fraser and the men of the Northwest Company, alone, on the mighty river, one hundred and fifty years ago.... Boys scrambled up on the huge timbers that once launched the famous river steamers; Simon

⁴³ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 2, File: Publicity Releases, Projects etc, Report on The Fraser Brigade, 28 May 1958.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Later, he became the artistic director of Expo ’67. See www.thecanadianencyclopaedia.com

Fraser stood up in the lead canoe and his men raised their paddles in salute, and the fantastic judge, now happily equipped with our loud-hailer led the berobed Queen of Williams Lake up to her knees in water to meet the Brigade, at the same time shouting a gloriously incoherent but very loud speech to a crowd who loved the whole unintelligible oration. The deluge of rain would have scattered a city audience in seconds. No one in Soda Creek seemed to notice. In the middle of the hubbub our PR type Doug Horan tapped me on the shoulder. Quietly against my ear he said “This is Centennial.” He was right.⁴⁶

The stagecoach was another re-creation aimed at reaching the widest possible audience. Alberta’s Golden Jubilee Committee suggested it as one of its most successful projects.⁴⁷ By 1956, the Committee had put a stagecoach race on the Cariboo Wagon Road on a list of priorities.⁴⁸ The following year, the Committee hired W.A.C. Bennett’s public relations firm, William Clancey and Associates, to work with the Special Promotions Subcommittee to produce some sort of stagecoach spectacle.

Like the mandate for the centenary as a whole, the stagecoach project was developed in the spirit of a truly provincial celebration. When organizers discovered that there were too few existing stagecoaches to carry out a race as originally intended the publicity firm planned a promotional run of one stagecoach. It was to tour much of the province, “as a means of linking together the various districts of BC into one great celebration” and attracting “the attention of Editors in top-flight national pictorial

⁴⁶ BCA, BCC ‘58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 2, file: Publicity releases, projects etc, Gordon Hilker’s Report on The Fraser Brigade, undated.

⁴⁷ Ibid., Box 6, File: Alberta Centennial 1957, Report of Visit to Alberta’s and Saskatchewan’s Golden Jubilee Committee Offices by T.F. Orr and L.J. Wallace, 1 to 3 November 1955.

⁴⁸ Ibid., Box 8, file: Board of Directors, Memo from L.H. McCance, 18 June 1956.

magazines as well as appeal to the spirit of a centennial.”⁴⁹ To keep a thread tied firmly to the present, the firm posited the stagecoach in a history of transportation, the key challenge faced by the provincial economy. The stagecoaches of the gold rush era had been supplanted by the modern motor vehicle, and the presentation was to draw attention to this transition.⁵⁰ But the stagecoach’s primary function was not educational; it was designed to draw crowds together and underline the significance of the centenary.

William Clancey’s Vice President wrote Wallace that “the stage coach complete with shotgun guards and armed outriders, certainly presents an appealing picture and should go over with a wallop.”⁵¹ A year before the spectacle was to hit the highways the Committee had already received hundreds of positive responses from people all over the province. In replying to one correspondent, Wallace easily compared frontier and contemporary values. The five hundred miles to be undertaken to complete the stagecoach journey would be long, he wrote, “but not grueling when you are taking part in something which commemorates your country and the ways of life which you love.”⁵²

While William Clancey was formulating the publicity value of the stagecoach run, the Centennial Committee arranged for the necessary equipment and drivers to bring the project to fruition. It hired Jack Turnbull, a Fraser Valley rancher and horseman, to supply the necessary stagecoach and six-horse team and guide it across the province. The Committee was confident that Turnbull had the necessary skills and demeanor to make

⁴⁹ Ibid., Box 21, file: Stagecoach Presentation and Minutes 1957-58, William Clancey and Associates Stage Coach Presentation, March 1957.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ BCA, British Columbia Centennial ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 20, File: Stagecoach, C.A.R. Anderson, Vice President William Clancey and Associates, to L.J. Wallace, 8 August 1957.

⁵² Ibid., L.J. Wallace to E.C. Schmalz, 13 August 1957.

the trip successful. The addition of Frank Barnard, a descendent of the original operators of Barnard's Express, as a passenger also promised the run would create historical interest. After some searching, Turnbull was able to borrow a suitable authentic Cariboo coach, albeit in need of reconditioning, from Lord Martin Cecil of 100 Mile House.⁵³ Turnbull told the *Victoria Daily Times*, "the coach, running gear and personnel will measure up to 1858 standards. We must make this trip ring true historically. We want no movie cowboy touches to it."⁵⁴ He told reporters that he would not be held up in his journey from an operational point of view or from "any bandits along the way."⁵⁵ As time would tell he would contend with both of these challenges.

The Committee's priorities did not lie solely with historical accuracy, rather it wanted the stagecoach run to go off without a hitch. The aim was to unify British Columbians with a display of progress by juxtaposing the horse-pulled stagecoach with new blacktop highways. For instance, the Committee had doubts about the ability of the refitted 100 Mile stagecoach to make the entire journey, so it arranged to have a California stage in better condition with "hard rubber tires" as a backup in case the BC coach broke down.⁵⁶ The Committee and the publicity company had planned for the stagecoach to begin the journey in the restored gold mining town of Barkerville, and to finish in the capital city with much fanfare, even though stages in the 1850s only traveled on the Cariboo Wagon Road from Yale to Barkerville.⁵⁷ For the sake of historical

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ *Victoria Daily Times*, 16 September 1957.

⁵⁵ *Vancouver Sun*, 16 September 1957.

⁵⁶ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 15, file: Fraser Saga, Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting, 7 November 1957.

⁵⁷ Cole Harris, "Moving Amid the Mountains, 1870-1930," *BC Studies* 58 (Summer 1983): 3-39.

accuracy, the chairman and secretary of the Barkerville centennial committee appealed to the Committee to finish the trip at Barkerville, where they could hold a two-or three-day celebration to welcome it as the community's local celebration. On a more practical note, they argued that because snow melt caused bad conditions on the road from Quesnel to Barkerville until early summer the stage run could not start from Barkerville until July.⁵⁸ Once the Committee accepted this alternate plan it estimated that the trip would take approximately thirty days.⁵⁹

The publicity firm worked on the final details for the journey. The stagecoach was to travel from town to town, bringing letters from the premier, lieutenant governor, and the centennial chairman, and passing letters from one mayor or reeve to the next. To placate island communities, once the stage left Victoria it was to travel up island crossing over to the mainland at Nanaimo, although the original stage route hit neither community. During November 1957, the company, along with Turnbull and Ted Fox, met island centennial committees to arrange suitable receptions. Similar to the Fraser re-creation, "at all times, to all committees and committee chairmen, it was stressed that the Stage coach was at their disposal while it was in their community and would participate as much as possible in any event they so desired."⁶⁰

But not every community was willing to jettison historical accuracy in favour of an optimal route and full participation. In the process of producing the spectacle for public consumption in as many communities as possible, the Committee overlooked the

⁵⁸ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 20, file: Stagecoach, Ted Fox to L.J. Wallace, 19 August 1957

⁵⁹ Ibid., Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting, 22 August 1957.

⁶⁰ Ibid., William Clancey and Associates Progress Report on the BC Centennial Stage Coach Run, undated.

resilience of local tradition. In response to the Board's appeal for local centennial committees to band around the stagecoach run, the Yale centennial committee passed a motion to "ignore the Victoria-Barkerville stage that is to pass through Yale on Thursday May 15, 1958 on the grounds that it is a falsification of records and that the stage was actually known as the Barkerville-Yale stage."⁶¹ The public relations firm did not apologize for misrepresenting the stagecoach route but told Yale that the BC Centennial Committee was using the stagecoach spectacle as a means to an end, that it "would be sort of a unifying factor in the Centennial. It would link all the points on the road with Victoria – and give some form of cohesion to the show."⁶² Yale's withdrawal from the project was an unexpected upset. As Wallace noted, "it would certainly be a shame not to have Yale play ball if we are able to do anything about it."⁶³

Despite Yale's refusal to participate in the stagecoach run, the organizers congratulated themselves on its success, reporting to Premier Bennett that:

of all the BC Centennial projects to date, the Stage Coach run to Barkerville was greeted with tremendous reception all the way along the line. The RCMP informed us in each of the towns we passed through that never before had they seen such crowds to witness a single event. Truly, it was remarkable. It would seem that this was one Centennial project that served the purpose of knitting together a large section of the province and

⁶¹Ibid., G.F. Armstrong, Secretary-Treasurer of Yale Centennial Committee, to C.A.R. Anderson, Vice President, William Clancey and Associates, 31 January 1957.

⁶² Ibid., C.A.R. Anderson to Mr. Neil MacPherson, Chairman, Yale Centennial Committee, 5 February 1958.

⁶³Ibid., L.J. Wallace to C.A.R. Anderson, 27 February 1958.

bringing home to them for the first time recognition of the fact that this, indeed, was BC's Centennial year.⁶⁴

The rarity of such a sight and the Stagecoach's western atmosphere drew vast community involvement and large crowds. Another centennial project had prepared many male citizens of the province to partake in such a spectacle. The enthusiasm mustered by men to grow centennial beards attests to the strength of the western ideal promoted in other areas of the celebrations. Beard growing as a promotional stunt was not new.⁶⁵ Like other elements of the centennial, the Committee possibly borrowed the idea of a whisker-growing contest from Alberta's Golden Jubilee. Early in 1957 the Committee discussed its merits, and although they liked the idea, decided to put the organization of any such contest in the hands of the local committees,⁶⁶ who proved to be enthusiastic organizers. For instance, in Burnaby the Kinsmen Club and the local centennial committee attracted over two hundred contestants.⁶⁷ Realizing thousands of men across the lower mainland and the province were growing beards, the Vancouver centennial committee organized a "face-off" to be held at the Pacific National Exhibition in the categories of "goatee, Van Dyke, Mutton Chops, full beard, longest, reddest, and

⁶⁴ Simon Fraser University Archives (hereafter SFU), WAC Bennett Papers, F-55-33-02 letters, reports, brochure, memorandum 1958, William Clancey to W.A.C. Bennett, 4 June 1958.

⁶⁵ During the Alberta's Golden Jubilee, communities sponsored whisker-growing contests. BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 2, file: Drafts of Various Items, Alberta Golden Jubilee Newsletter undated; and to re-create the old west, communities in the western United States encouraged beard-growing for anniversaries. Gerald Carson, "Hair Today; Gone Tomorrow," *American Heritage* 17 (February 1966), 46.

⁶⁶ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 3, British Columbia Centennial Committee Minutes, 14 March 1957.

⁶⁷ *Vancouver Province*, 28 February 1958.

oddest growth.”⁶⁸ Although organized locally, the Committee was thrilled with these whisker-growing contests. The popularity of western imagery in the centennial, and the willingness of men to play along by cultivating their facial hair, at least for a brief while, demonstrated solidarity with the populist ideals disseminated within the centenary celebrations. As the final report stated, “all those who participated in the manly art of beard-growing contributed greatly to the atmosphere of the birthday party.”⁶⁹ BC’s male citizens were replicating the province’s hegemonic discourses.

Delving further into the discourses surrounding and reception of Century Sam, beard growing, the stagecoach and Fraser brigade, reveals much about the gender and racial assumptions that grounded white British Columbians’ self-identities. Academic literature recognizes that race and gender are not biological or essential categories; rather, they have shifting meanings rooted in the historical struggle over place and identity.⁷⁰ Therefore periods of great social and economic changes result in crises in white manhood. Two periods are particularly singled out by cultural and gender historians: the nineteenth century and the mid-twentieth century. Many scholars argue that Victorian ideals of self-restraint, industrial capitalism and imperialism in the nineteenth century led white men to reinforce their dominance by constructing themselves against “others”: the

⁶⁸ City of Vancouver Archives (hereafter CVA), British Columbia Centennial Committee fonds, MSS 178, vol. 1 file 8, Vancouver Centennial News, undated.

⁶⁹ *The Report British Columbia Centennial Committee*, 316.

⁷⁰ See for instance, Kay Anderson, *Vancouver’s Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1991); Perry, *On the Edge of Empire* and Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Woman’s Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

working-classes, women, African-American or colonized peoples.⁷¹ In *On the Edge of Empire*, Adele Perry also argues that white men in colonial British Columbia underwent a crisis of confidence, which led to an active construction of a powerful, rough, working-class, white homosocial masculinity, which Victorian reformers abhorred. British Columbia, and its mining industry, seemed a welcome release for “white men disillusioned with industrial capitalism and the visions of masculinity it offered. Embittered by the false promises of capitalism they sought an environment where hard work would secure them manly self-sufficiency and respect.”⁷² While the goldfields were plural environments, white men created homosocial enclaves denied to First Nations like drinking establishments. Drinking, violence and gambling created a “white identity [that] was celebrated, and men’s authority over both women and First Nations people was

⁷¹ Gail Bederman in *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997) particularly contributed to this thought in four varied case studies, by exploring discourses of civilization that white men applied against others to reinforce their masculine power. Anne McClintock’s *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York: Routledge, 1995) is another expansive study that reminds us that colonization accorded white males their power. See also Jonathan Rutherford, *Forever England: Reflections on Masculinity and Empire* (London: Lawrence & Wishart Limited, 1997). In the North American context, both Robert Berkhofer’s *The White Man’s Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978) and Daniel Francis’s *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992) argue that popular depictions of First Nations were inventions that fulfilled white needs. Elizabeth Vibert’s *Traders Tales: Narratives of Cultural Encounters on the Columbian Plateau, 1807-1846* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997) and “Real Men Hunt Buffalo: Masculinity, Race and Class in British Fur Traders’ Narratives,” *Gender and History* 8 (1996): 4-21 explores traders’ self-identification in the uncertain arena of the fur trade. She argues that trader’s perceptions of “buffalo hunters” as being the most manly and brave - but spontaneous and wasteful - “Indians” they encountered, really salvaged their own masculinity. No matter how brave they were, they were dependent on white technological superiority – guns – to hunt.

⁷² Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, 38.

reinforced through myriad daily practices.”⁷³ Similarly, studies have demonstrated that white men in mid-twentieth century British Columbia also had anxieties about their modern society, which resulted in an enthusiasm to replicate this nineteenth century white homosocial environment in 1958’s celebrations.

Just as nineteenth century white masculinity could simultaneously be reinforced and denigrated by discourses of civilization, technology and self-restraint, Christopher Dummitt argues that mid-twentieth century modernity bolstered white male power, while also alienating men from primal masculinity. Modernity – control over the physical, social and psychological environment that post-war affluence, technology and the welfare state afforded – accorded middle-class white males powerful positions in society and thus contained “a neat logic of gender distinctions” and “a powerful justification for inequality.” However, modernity also was “antithetical to being masculine. Many critics argued that various features of modern life – from bureaucratic rationality to suburban living – harmed an allegedly primal masculinity.”⁷⁴ Advertisers and cultural producers in the post-war period propagated a new domesticated manhood focused on home and leisure. For instance, barbequing (although still technically ‘cooking’) was depicted as transcending homemaking since it was linked with the outdoors, and cooking raw meat over hot coals harkened back to an earlier anti-modern age.⁷⁵ In addition, fathers were made to feel responsible for providing and organizing family vacations to the lake,

⁷³ Ibid., 47.

⁷⁴ Christopher Dummitt, *The Manly Modern*, 4 and 5.

⁷⁵ Christopher Dummitt, “Finding a Place for Father: Selling the Barbecue in Postwar Canada,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* (1998), 214-215.

campground and hiking trail.⁷⁶ Such organized middle-class family life was a marker of modernity and created the desire to escape and practice a more rugged, anti-modern form of masculinity. In British Columbia, Tina Loo and Dummitt argue that big game hunting and mountaineering, respectively, allowed release from the alienating tendency of city life and suburbia as both activities involved an element of risk that was absent in men's day to day lives. The "test" of hunting large game or scaling a mountain peak facilitated a redefinition of whiteness and masculinity along the lines of risk-taking and self-sufficiency.⁷⁷

Risk-taking and self-sufficiency were ideals also promoted in 1958's centenary. The Committee's decision to paint BC's past as a rough-and-ready frontier rather than as an imperial project, shored up these white, masculine ideals. White men's commitment to further engage in frontier historical re-creations (to suffer the prickles of new beard growth!) spoke to the need to redefine domesticated white masculinity. Ironically, just as BC's original miners shrugged off restrictive contemporary values in the creation of their homosocial culture, so too did their descendants by replicating that very culture. Although some commentators questioned the artificiality of these frontier events, anecdotal evidence and the official Centennial report reveal that they were very popular. For instance, figure 4 demonstrates that even in such a rainy and muskeg-laden climate as

⁷⁶ Robert Rutherford, "Fatherhood, Masculinity, and the Good Life During Canada's Baby Boom, 1945-1960," *Journal of Family History* 24 (July 1999), 356-358.

⁷⁷ Tina Loo, "Of Moose and Men: Hunting for Masculinities in the Far West," *Western Historical Quarterly* 32 (2001): 297-319 and Christopher Dummitt, "Risk on the Rocks: Modernity, Manhood and Mountaineering in Postwar British Columbia" *BC Studies* 141 (2004): 3-29. Both authors acknowledge that the hunters and mountaineers could not fully flee modernity; they became purveyors of it in the wilderness by introducing rules of etiquette and specific equipment and supplies.

Prince Rupert – far from the imagined ‘open plains’ of the western – violent gun-touting desperados formed an essential part of their community parade.

The opportunity the Centennial presented for anti-modern release is demonstrated most clearly in discourse around the “manly art of beard-growing.” Since the turn of the century, beards had virtually disappeared from men’s faces; and particularly in the post-war years, the ease and proliferation of Gillette razors “facilitated home-shaving and contributed to an ever growing pressure for modern industrialized Americans to be

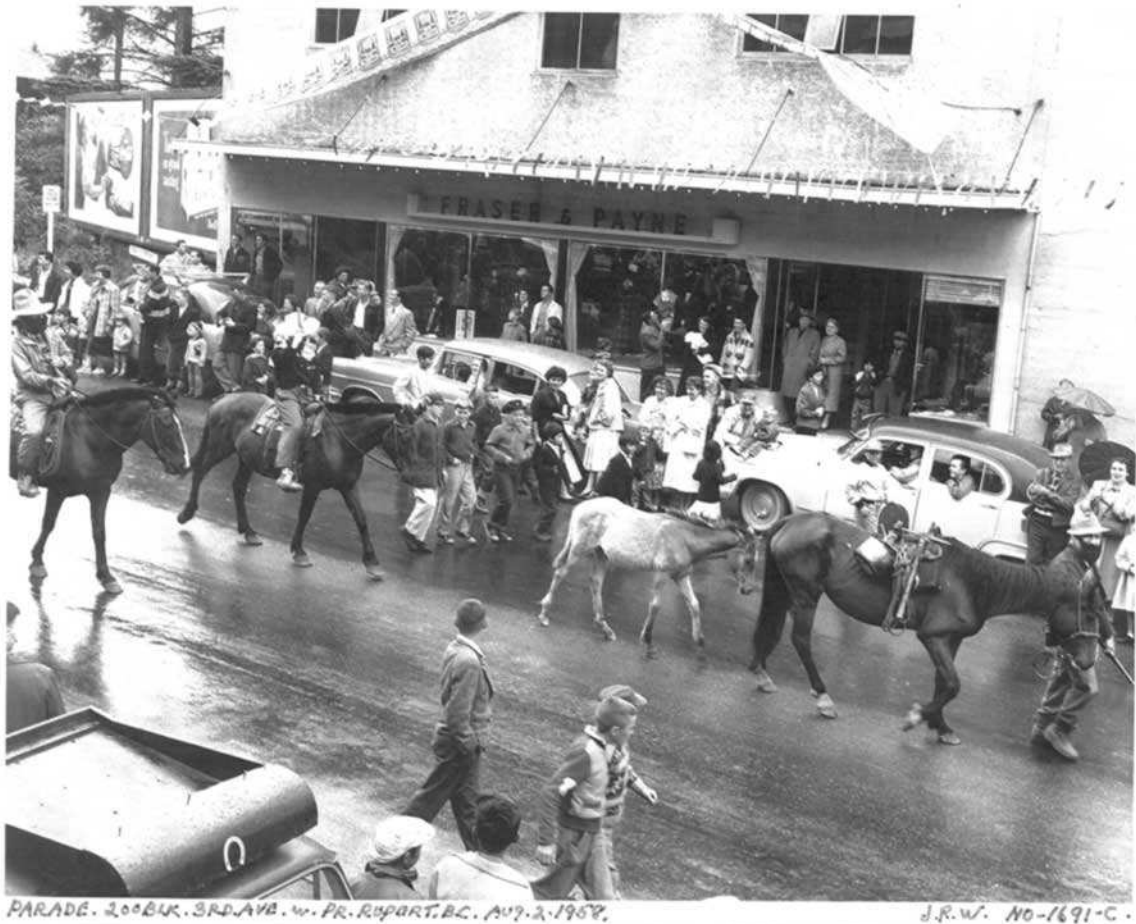


Figure 4: Prince Rupert Parade, 1958. Prince Rupert City and Regional Archives and Museum of Northern B.C. Wrathall Photo Finishing Fonds. Reprinted with Permission.

‘clean-shaven’.”⁷⁸ Growing a beard presented an easy opportunity to hark back to an earlier age and recapture something felt missing from modern life. A Victoria man heartily endorsed the contest, writing to his local committee that “this patriotic gesture towards the pioneers of our Province will also provide our adult males with a legitimate excuse to fulfill that secret desire to realize a fully complete outward *symbol of authority*.”⁷⁹ Beard growth would visibly differentiate white males from their female counterparts and from less hirsute non-white males. As this quotation suggests, only white males could claim affinity with the pioneers who founded the province.

As the centennial drew nearer and men’s beards became scruffier, the provincial papers had a field day with this new cultural phenomenon. Contrary to the Victoria man who felt beards would somehow invest men with authority, a *Vancouver Province* writer commented that the beards twentieth-century men were growing for the centennial were somehow at odds with their soft faces. As evidence, he pointed to the fading photographs the province was revisiting in light of the centennial. These pictures of “the pioneers of the province, the gold miners, the stage-coach drivers” confirm that, “their bearing is entirely different from today’s version of manhood. They face the camera as though they know it is a loaded shotgun and are just letting the photographer get the drop in a fast draw.”⁸⁰ Modern BC men were too removed from primal masculinity to wear their new beards convincingly. Or perhaps their motivations for growing beards should be questioned. Sporting the headline “That Beard may have Sinister Significance,” a

⁷⁸ Allan Peterkin, *One Thousand Beards: A Cultural History of Facial Hair* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2001), 180.

⁷⁹ Victoria City Archives, Greater Victoria Centennial Committee, Series 146, General Office Files 1956-1959, W. Watkins to Captain D.J. Proudfoot, Chairman, Victoria BC Centennial Committee, 12 September 1957.

⁸⁰ *Vancouver Province*, 19 June 1958.

Vancouver Sun writer assembled a panel of psychologists to uncover the motives guiding men to grow centennial beards. Reading this article likely dashed many men's hopes of emulating masculine pioneer ideals, as one psychologist stated that those who felt "inadequate as a male" often grew a beard as "easy proof of masculinity." Another perceptively argued that beards are a marker of rebellion against society.⁸¹ In a pair of cartoons the provincial press also ridiculed the beards centennial fans were now growing. Rather than receiving admiration, centennial beards became objects of ridicule because, unlike the miners and pioneers who grew beards out of convenience, 1950s men were growing them out of a sense of vanity. One feminizes the beard-grower by comparing his attempts to nurture his growth to the vanity of two women who flank him in the beauty shop. See figure 5. Another, drawn by Al Beaton, drew attention to the disapproval family members felt for the whiskers of the centennial enthusiast, leading to its sabotage. An upset smooth-faced man looks out of a bathroom door, long beard-hairs trailing behind him on the floor, yelling, "OK, who was mixing weed killer in the bathroom sink!"⁸²

Century Sam was another symbol that revealed the contradictions of modernity; the Committee used him to connect past to present to celebrate modern achievements, but by being too modern, and too tame, he lost a sense of primal masculinity, leading the Committee repeatedly to reconstruct it.⁸³ In many parts of the centenary the past was juxtaposed with the present, not so much to vaunt the past, but to compare it with present

⁸¹ *Vancouver Sun*, 28 February 1958.

⁸² *Vancouver Province*, 26 May 1958.

⁸³ For a discussion and image of Sam's modernity in the 1971 Centenary see Chapter Six.

goals. For instance, the Committee's '58 promotional film, *The Tall Country* surveyed contemporary industry in the province, and singled out the “crag and cliffs and



Figure 5: Beard growing Vanity. *Vancouver Province*, 15 August 1958.

“rivers” as barriers to resource extraction - but asserted that everywhere road-building and industry were producing “the sounds of men meeting the challenge of the barrier.” It concluded, “the challenge of a rugged land is still the central theme of British Columbia. But today’s pioneers have built modern cities, where men direct the trade and commerce and the continuing exploration of the land.”⁸⁴ Sam was a reminder of the type of men who would again bring the boom to BC. Exploration and exploitation of the landscape required a certain type of man who was as hardy as the miners of yesteryear. One newspaper editorial boasted that Sam “recalls and typifies the pioneer who opened up this

⁸⁴ *The Tall Country*, Parry Films, 1957.

great province and that repays a debt; all the wondrous modernity of today hinges on the sturdy work and sacrifice of the early explorers and settlers like Century Sam.”⁸⁵

Some centennial observers did not agree. Sam did not seem to be an authentic replication of manly miners and rugged pioneers. One *Vancouver Sun* newspaper columnist, describing the centennial as too much “ballyhoo,” inadvertently stumbled on the reason for Sam’s existence: “it’s much easier to whip up a mythical, rather ridiculous-looking figure like Century Sam,” he wrote, “than to dig into the records and tell the facts of such giants as Douglas, De Cosmos, Begbie, Trutch etc.”⁸⁶ A Vancouver Island resident objected to the historical inaccuracy of Sam himself, writing that “anyone who has ever seen pictures of the prospectors of 1858 knows that they were a dirty, unshaven, rugged and adventurous breed of men, who bore no resemblance whatsoever to that ridiculous monstrosity.” The writer’s tirade against the “misbegotten, misshapen cross between a Walt Disney dwarf and Howdy-Doody” continued, “If the whole celebration is to be as phony and synthetic as its trade mark, it would have been better to have let the pioneers rest in their forgotten graves rather than drag them out and make sideshow freaks of them, for the amusement of a generation that has repudiated practically everything to which those early explorers and pioneers devoted their lives.”⁸⁷ It is important to note that the underlying interpretation of the province’s pioneer origins was not disputed here. Rather, Century Sam’s unlikely appearance was. With his cherubic face and clean western apparel, he was no match for the *uber*-masculine pioneers imagined by modern British Columbians. The criticism of its much-loved Sam had to

⁸⁵ *Victoria Daily Colonist*, 4 October 1956.

⁸⁶ *Vancouver Sun*, 2 January 1958.

⁸⁷ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 10, file: Century Sam Project, *Vancouver Province* clipping, undated.

have stung the Committee. Making light of the comments, Sam's cartoonist, Robert Banks, presented Wallace with miners drawn to this author's specifications as a way to confirm Sam's suitability as mascot. In it, Sam nervously avoids eye contact with ruddy-faced, unkempt, dirty-bearded, smoking miners.⁸⁸

As mid-twentieth century masculinity was also based on heterosexuality,⁸⁹ Sam's creators invented displays of virility. His heterosexuality was confirmed with a widely disseminated promotional postcard depicting Sam being caught in a fishing-net by a leggy girl-next-door pin-up representing the province. Sam opined that he is "all caught up by a beautiful party, while the beauty looks out to the viewers replying "you're invited to join us."⁹⁰ But Sam's single status did not last for long. In 1966 Sam came back with a bride, Centennial Sue, to ring in this centennial. Likely Sue was introduced to generate new interest in the centennial and its mascots; however, she did not diminish Sam's wild west ethos. Betrothed Sam contained both markers of mid-twentieth century and nineteenth century masculinity; thus the Committee hoped he had not lost his appeal to modern men.

Aside from beard-growing, the stagecoach run presented another opportunity for British Columbian men to create an anti-modern, masculine, pioneer atmosphere in the streets of their hometowns. Despite Turnbull's assertion that the trip would be historically accurate without hold-ups or wild-west antics, to his chagrin, all participating

⁸⁸ BCA, British Columbia Centennial '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 10, file: Century Sam Robert Banks cartoon.

⁸⁹ See for instance, George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), and Mary Louis Adams, *The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

⁹⁰ City of Vancouver Archives, Major Matthews Collection, MSS 54, promotional postcard.

communities wanted to recreate a version of the old west at the Stage's arrival. The BC Centennial Committee was working at cross-purposes by actively promoting a vigilante west for individuals and communities to rally around. For instance, it issued a press release saying "the merry month of May will be considerably livened up in British Columbia this year by some simple little pleasures such as shootings, holdups and hangings"; however, it reassured readers that "all violence will be 'mock' – to centre around the BC Centennial Stage coach run."⁹¹ William Clancey's Vice President told Wallace of the growing anticipation for it: "maybe you won't believe this coming from a blasé ex-newspaper man, but I'm beginning to get really excited about the stage coach run and certainly feel the enthusiasm is catching."⁹²

Nanaimo was one community that was inspired by such press releases. Its local centennial committee chairman George Molecey planned an elaborate replication of the old west to coincide with the stagecoach's arrival by staging "a full dress 'hold-up' of the coach at an appropriate spot ... near the Hotel [in Cassidy] which we would like to refurbish with a log front and 'old days' theme." Wallace was pleased with these preparations for it was "exactly the type of spirit we wish to engender in the project."⁹³ Molecey and his committee pulled it off. When the stage passed through Nanaimo in May 1958, nearly 5000 people witnessed its arrival and subsequent hold-up. The local

⁹¹ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 20, file: Stagecoach, News Release, 28 January 1958.

⁹² Ibid., C.A.R. Anderson, Vice President, William Clancey and Associates to L.J. Wallace, 31 January 1958.

⁹³ Nanaimo Community Archives (hereafter NCA), Civic Boards and Committees, 1992-011-C, Box 6, file: Nanaimo Centennial Committee Correspondence 1957-58, L.J. Wallace to George Molecey, 26 September 1957.

paper congratulated it as “the most authentic display of wild-west hijinks so far staged to mark the historic stage’s passing.”⁹⁴

The reception after the stage’s arrival carried on the western theme with “music by the Rhythm Pals, gingham girls, cowpokes and the jingle of silver spurs mingled to welcome the tired riders and horses.”⁹⁵ The participants in the hold-up, the cowpokes, and the riders were all male residents. This was a homosocial re-creation meant for Nanaimo’s white males to reminisce about a male-dominated frontier. Despite previous suggestions from the Central Committee to utilize local women’s groups to prepare food for centennial-year events,⁹⁶ Molecey instead hosted a “Chuck Wagon” reception “in true tradition” for the drivers who would naturally want to eat a “mess of Pork & Beans, Barbequed Beef and the trimmings,”⁹⁷ instead of fussy modern foods.

As detailed in the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation’s travelogue, *Ride of the Last Stagecoach*, similar mock hold-ups and barbeques marked the stagecoach’s journey all along its route. The barbeque was also symbolic. Anthropological studies underline the importance of meat to Western societies where “environmental control is an important value.” “Killing, cooking and eating other animals’ flesh” dovetails with mastery over the wilderness, because it “provides perhaps the ultimate authentication of human superiority over the rest of nature.”⁹⁸ The film includes a scene of several Aldergrove men digging up a pit barbeque making the narrator ponder “nobody should

⁹⁴ *Nanaimo Daily Free Press*, 10 May 1958.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ British Columbia Centennial Committee, *A Guide to Community Organization of the British Columbia Centennial Celebrations* (1956), 18.

⁹⁷ NCA, Civic Boards and Committees, 1992-011-C, Box 6, file: Nanaimo Centennial Committee Correspondence 1957-58, George Molecey to L.J. Wallace, 17 September 1957.

⁹⁸ Nick Fiddes, *Meat: A Natural Symbol* (London: Routledge, 1991), 65.

work that hard unless...unless...well by the Beard of Simon Fraser! It's grub, meat...and in a moment there follows a brief and wordless commercial on the glories of British Columbia beef." The scene then changes to the stagecoach drivers eating contentedly with townspeople.⁹⁹ Barbequing was the cooking method of choice because it was linked both with the outdoors (man's natural domain) and a pre-modern, muscular manhood.¹⁰⁰

The stagecoach run was a culmination of the western imagery engendered by the Committee. As was argued at the start of this chapter, a mythologized west was a theme all communities could rally behind, but the "west" was also a culmination of masculine ideals. The consumption of meat and the lengthy route indicated that British Columbian men had surmounted the province's challenging natural environment. Engaging in horse-rides and hold-ups, "even to the point of using real ammunition in Quesnel," signaled men's desires to further the anti-modern ethos achieved by growing centennial beards. One centennial publication gushed, "At no time in history has one stage been held-up so often in such a short space of time...Holdup and hanging, passes and arrests, bands and buntings – they were all part of a tremendously successful show."¹⁰¹

Although images like figure 4 indicate that many women observed these western events, the Committee organized no equivalent events for women. In the few instances where women were mentioned in Centennial literature, it was assumed they would have a traditional or symbolic role. For instance, the 1966/67 Centennial Committee considered a beauty contest to be a suitable event for women, with one twist. To commemorate the occasion, participants should wear no modern clothing, but "all the various apparel of the

⁹⁹ *Ride of the Last Stagecoach*, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1958.

¹⁰⁰ Dummitt, "Finding a Place for Father," 214-215.

¹⁰¹ *The Western Giant*, September 1958, 6.

Confederation period.”¹⁰² Joining in this mood, the BC Government Travel Bureau in Victoria had four “pretty girls” who worked as travel counselors wear “the bustles, crinolines and shawls of BC’s pioneer days” for the duration of the 1958 centennial year, since “there’s nothing like a swish of crinolines around her ankles to make a girl feel in a party mood.”¹⁰³ As alluded to earlier, women also had a symbolic or ceremonial role. Although Queen Aurora was highly visible in Prince George’s Fraser celebration, her only role was to provide narration and a bit of regality to the celebrations. Another visible female presence during the Centennial was the leggy fisherwoman depicted in the 1958 promotional postcard. Representing no mortal female, she was a “stand-in” for the province. “Women are typically constructed as the symbolic bearers of the nation,” Anne McClintock reminds us, “but are denied any direct relation to national agency.”¹⁰⁴

By positing masculine pioneering as the history to be celebrated, the centennials did little to ensure the inclusion of First Nations representation or First Nations peoples themselves, apart from those required to balance the “cowboys and Indians” equation culled from Hollywood. Thus, First Nations served a background and superficial role. For instance, when the stagecoach arrived in Chilliwack, townspeople must have felt they could not re-create the old west without the requisite Hollywood bare-chested, tomahawk-carrying “band of wild Indians” that “escorted the stage out of the village.” This scene was depicted in *Ride of the Last Stagecoach*, where the narrator explains “they were friendly...they only shot the corns off the feet of a couple of public relations

¹⁰² Canadian Confederation Centennial Committee of British Columbia, *Centennial Suggestions for Local Centennial Committees in British Columbia for 1966 and/or 1967* (Victoria, 1966), 12.

¹⁰³ *Vancouver Province*, 20 February 1957.

¹⁰⁴ McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 354.

men.”¹⁰⁵ In other towns such as Nanaimo, there is no evidence organizers even considered First Nations participation or representation in the stage ride.

In staging the Fraser brigade, however, the Committee could not totally ignore First Nations, although it denied them a large role. Not only was Hilker loath to organize their participation, he dissuaded the families of Native paddlers from coming to the community celebrations. Although it would have been logical that river communities would highlight first contact in their celebrations (as there was no white settlement during Fraser’s time), communities preferred to celebrate their gold rush and pioneer origins.

The stop at Lytton was the only recreation to attempt to highlight the contact made between Fraser’s crew and the people encountered on the river in 1808. This stop was billed as being a “major Indian celebration,”¹⁰⁶ but the Committee and the local Indian agent orchestrated the event without input from the Thompson First Nations (Nlha7kàpmx). Hilker poured over Fraser’s diary and ethnographic accounts by James Teit to plan the re-creation, but did not use oral histories of the encounter among the Nlha7kàpmx. All accounts, as Wendy Wickwire ably demonstrates, have common threads including a religious significance attached to Fraser and some foreknowledge of his arrival.¹⁰⁷ Hilker took many liberties with Fraser’s account to ensure an exciting re-creation that was reverential to the explorer. In Fraser’s account on 19 June 1808 he wrote that the ‘principal chief’ “received us at water side, where, assisted by several others, he took me by the arms and conducted me in a moment up the hill to the camp

¹⁰⁵ *Ride of the Last Stagecoach*. It is unclear in the film if these “Indians” wearing Plain’s headdresses were First Nations or Euro-Canadian residents of Chilliwack.

¹⁰⁶ BCA, BCC’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 15, file: Fraser Saga, The Fraser Brigade Speech by L.J. Wallace, undated.

¹⁰⁷ Wendy Wickwire, “To See Ourselves as the Other’s Other: Nlaka’pamux Contact Narratives,” *Canadian Historical Review* 75 (1994): 1-20.

where his people were sitting in rows, to the number of twelve hundred; and I had to shake hands with all of them.”¹⁰⁸ As is consistent with this record, the brigade landed on a bench at the opposite side of the river, as Fraser described in his journal. Upon crossing the river, the Lytton re-creation and celebration was to begin, but rather than being taken “by the arms,” as is described in 1808, the 1958 Fraser was “chaired and carried up to the various levels...until he reaches the plateau.”¹⁰⁹ Being carried upon a throne was likely Hilker’s nod to Fraser’s remark about being received as “superior beings,”¹¹⁰ and certainly made for a more exciting entry than Fraser being pulled up the bank by hand. But it served another purpose: the reinvention of Fraser as a hero for modern British Columbians. This local celebration was more to do with explorer-worship than any accurate portrayal of first contact. And although advertised as “portraying the ancient and modern life of the Indian people of the Province” the focus of the recreation at Lytton was on Fraser. In fact, despite Fraser’s account of the Nlha7kàpmx welcome which included a greeting, a salmon feast and singing and dancing, Hilker’s depiction of this event in 1958 was unrecognizable. During the centennial, “Fraser” was welcomed with “the ceremonial Shaman’s pipe of Jade,” feats of daring on horseback, trading of blue beads, and “all the paraphernalia [sic] and spectacle which we can inject into the presentation.”¹¹¹ It is clear from this quotation that the Committee felt any stereotypical depiction of First Nations would do, since the focus was on welcoming Fraser.

¹⁰⁸ Simon Fraser, *The Letters and Journals of Simon Fraser, 1806-1808*, ed. W. Kaye Lamb (Toronto: MacMillan, 1960), 87.

¹⁰⁹ BCA, BCC ‘58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 15, file: Fraser Saga, The Fraser Brigade Speech by L.J. Wallace, undated.

¹¹⁰ Fraser, *The Letters and Journals of Simon Fraser*, 88.

¹¹¹ BCA, BCC ‘58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 15, file: Fraser Saga, Interim Report – Fraser Brigade, 31 October 1957.

Another example of historical re-creation also shows how centennial activities did not seek to erase the presence of First Nations totally, but reduced their role to that of caretakers for subsequent explorers and pioneers. This was demonstrated in the Committee's *The Tall Country*; a film commissioned to mark the centenary and to educate visitors and residents about the province's past and promising future. The historical section opens with a panorama of mountains against blue sky; the camera then lowers and focuses on a bare-chested Native actor carrying a fishing net. At the same time a voice-over says "little more than a century ago the mountains stood silent and unknown; hunting grounds for tribes of Native Indians. The Indian was here to greet the first explorer and fur trader, and he witnessed the dramatic events which were destined to spur the real opening of the country." To cries of "Gold! Gold!" the actor turns and gives a conspiratorial wink and nod to the camera before walking out of the scene - and ostensibly out of the province's development.

Finally, these frontier and western re-creations and motifs must be read according to the particular political context of the time. The Cold War atmosphere crept into all aspects of Canadian life, be it the accumulation and consumption of suburban lifestyles as "proof of capitalism's success,"¹¹² the investigation and dismissal of homosexual federal civil servants as possible security threats¹¹³ or the influencing of local education boards'

¹¹² Veronica Strong-Boag, "Home Dreams: Women and the Suburban Experiment in Canada, 1945-1960," *Canadian Historical Review* 72 (1991), 474.

¹¹³ Daniel J. Robinson and David Kimmel, "The Queer Career of Homosexual Security Vetting in Cold War Canada," *Canadian Historical Review* 75 (1994): 319-345.

policies.¹¹⁴ So too did the Cold War loom over the centennial, where provincial papers ran articles about local celebrations alongside news of Soviet space superiority with Sputnik. Although not explicitly spelled out, in almost all aspects of the centennial the Committee differentiated the foundations and spirit of the province from that of the conforming, atheistic Soviet Union. For instance, a film producer pitched a commemorative film that focused on the “elements of our existence” including a “God-given heritage” of abundant natural resources and “Democracy under which we live – responsible government, free enterprise, a high standard of living, time for leisure and enjoyment.”¹¹⁵

Anti-communist ideologies were also rampant in the historical re-creations discussed in this chapter. The Committee de-emphasized the discipline and order that could be associated with colonial-era governance, and allowed an American-style wild west to stand in for the province’s past. This mythologized history served to reinforce the freedom, ingenuity and spirit of British Columbians, while also constructing a toughness and aggression necessary for any future conflict that would threaten their way of life. Century Sam embodied such a spirit and would retaliate if provoked.¹¹⁶ Beard growing demonstrated solidarity with these pioneers as well as demonstrating modern men’s antipathy towards conformity.

Religion also crept into the re-creations in such a way as to indicate British Columbians’ adherence to it, as opposed to atheistic societies. During the Fraser brigade,

¹¹⁴ Frank K. Clarke, “Keep Communism out of Our Schools’: Cold War Anti-Communism at the Toronto Board of Education, 1948-1951,” *Labour/Le Travail* 49 (2002): 93-119.

¹¹⁵ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 14, File: Film-Parry 1957, L.M. Parry to L.H. McCance, 19 November 1956.

¹¹⁶ Refer to page 145 about Sam’s tough mythology.

the community of Yale focused its local re-creation on the famous Ned McGowan's War. Edward McGowan was a "notorious California outlaw"¹¹⁷ who led a group of American miners at Hill's Bar, near Yale. During a spat with rival American miners at Yale, McGowan imprisoned the town magistrate, and the new colony interpreted this action as the start of US annexation. Although historical accounts have it that the colonial authorities – Colonel Moody, Judge Begbie and Lieutenant Mayne - arrived alone in Yale, while Royal Engineers remained downriver, in the re-creation, Hilker added the bluejackets "to increase the colour of the spectacle."¹¹⁸ In this re-creation order was restored, not by harsh disciplinary action as might befit an authoritarian province, but by the power of faith. When the authorities arrived in the winter of 1858 Moody insisted upon a church service to give an appearance of order and stability. Only after the service did fistfights between townspeople threaten to erupt into a riot or worse.¹¹⁹ But in the re-creation, the church service capped off the "war" in a show of unity. After the play, the miners and bluejackets together "march[ed] up the hill and form[ed] in front of the famous old church. Colonel Moody calls the miners to the service, at which point a singer steps out of the door of the historic church and sings...the Lord's Prayer."¹²⁰ This concluding show of unity perfectly reinforced the larger aim of the Centennial – to bring white British Columbians together no matter their differences - but it is also notable that the re-creation ends with this show of faith that the organizers felt would demonstrate "its

¹¹⁷ Margaret Ormsby, *British Columbia: A History* (Vancouver, Macmillan, 1958), 170.

¹¹⁸ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 15, file: Fraser Saga, Interim Report – Fraser Brigade, 31 October 1957.

¹¹⁹ Donald J. Hakula, "Ned McGowan's War," *The Beaver* 83 (February/March 2003), 20.

¹²⁰ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 15, file: Fraser Saga, The Fraser Brigade Speech by L.J. Wallace, undated.

resultant effect on the conduct of miners.”¹²¹ The influence of religion over the miners reinforced the Christian foundations of the province.

By repeating themes of democracy, self-reliance, and individual industry in the centennial’s historical re-creations, the province constructed a past suited to its present activity. The centennial’s historical themes and re-creations, therefore, were invented hegemonic traditions. Primarily, the government drew on typical themes of daring pioneers, coupled with new, popular, western motifs to invite mass participation. Positing the province as having democratic, self-reliant and entrepreneurial origins, however, helped the W.A.C. Bennett government lay an ideological foundation for the province’s future direction. The excitement that white British Columbians showed at these events and the acceptance of these pioneering themes demonstrate that they were, for the most part, willing to go along. This adherence would, as the following chapters illustrate, be short lived.

¹²¹ Ibid., Interim Report – Fraser Brigade, 31 October 1957.

**Chapter Five:
“Indians on Warpath over Centennial:” First Nations Representation,
Participation and Resistance**

In the cold of winter in 1965, George Clutesi – Native leader and artist from the Port Alberni Tse-Shaht nation - traveled to Ottawa with eight other Native leaders at the invitation of the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA). They were there ostensibly to work on plans for the Indian pavilion at Expo '67. But when they arrived, the DIA suggested the pavilion take the form of a giant 100-foot metal and wooden teepee; as Clutesi later recalled, “the blueprints were all set up when we got there.” When the leaders objected to the plans, the department gave them an impossibly short deadline of one week to come up with something else, all the while championing its original plan. Unable to reach the deadline, Clutesi and the others found “there was nothing else we could do but vote for it.” Despite Clutesi’s misgivings, he eventually painted an enormous mural on an adjacent building at the pavilion and was awarded a Canada Centennial Medal for it. The opportunity to showcase Native culture and resiliency likely overcame his initial reluctance. As he had stated at the time of the 1965 meeting, “we suggested showing some aspects of the Indians’ glorious past, the period when he sank to low depths, his reawakening and a cry of hope for the future.”¹ This anecdote - of one man’s experience with one commemorative celebration - reflects the misgivings that many First Nations had about partaking in Euro-Canadian celebrations, including British Columbia’s three centenaries, and contains a hint of why many did so.

¹ *The Vancouver Province*, 23 December 1965.

The immediate post-war years saw great political and social upheaval in British Columbia, particularly in the venue of First Nations-State relations. Following the Second World War, with its high level of First Nations enlistment, veterans' organizations and church groups lobbied for the federal government to revisit the place of First Nations in the country.² The war "had helped to create the conditions for reform of the legislation and administration that ruled so many aspects of their lives."³ This discourse resulted in a Senate and Commons Committee on the Indian Act. Through its recommendations, Northwest Coast natives regained the right to perform the potlatch legally, affirming their cultural distinctiveness in 1951. At the same time the provincial legislature enfranchised British Columbia First Nations in 1947, which affirmed their rights to citizenship. Then in 1949, Frank Calder, a Nisga'a, was elected to the legislature as the MLA for the Atlin riding. Despite these achievements, the legacy of colonialism was strong among the BC populace. Until the end of the 1960s, the dominant society commonly believed that BC First Nations still desired assimilation.⁴

Throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s the First Nations population slowly rose and the children increasingly entered the provincial school system. The federal government extended the vote to status First Nations in 1960. Still, tacit discrimination continued: for instance, students still experienced segregationist policies in integrated classrooms and what employment there was, remained largely seasonal.⁵

² Olive Dickason, *Canada's First Nations* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992), 329.

³ R. Scott Sheffield, *The Red Man's on the Warpath: The Image of the "Indian" and the Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 109.

⁴ Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: the Indian Land Question*. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990), 252, note 27.

⁵ Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 310.

Native activism and academic study in this period highlighted these discrepancies, and the ambiguous place which First Nations occupied. By the middle of the 1960s, British Columbians could not ignore the provincial organizations that First Nations founded in the preceding decade. A common residential school experience united First Nations to challenge their status and fight for political recognition in settling land claims. These currents led to the formation of new organizations, such as the North American Indian Brotherhood of BC, and the revival of older moribund organizations such as the Native Brotherhood. First Nations were optimistic about their activism and were buoyed by their recent political gains.⁶ In addition, the 1966 Hawthorn report, commissioned by the federal government, revealed that the standards of living and life expectancy for Canada's First Nations were far below those of its other citizens. The report recommended that Canada forge a new relationship with First Nations, since the Indian Act and the reserve system perpetuated this inequality.⁷

Native activism was prominent in 1969 when the federal government, acting on the recommendations of the Hawthorn report, announced in a White Paper that it would move towards abolishing the Indian Act and dismantling the Department of Indian Affairs. In effect, the White Paper proposed to end First Nations' special status and their land claims. The proposal "hit a solid wall of opposition." After First Nations in British Columbia and elsewhere rejected its assimilationist bent and its repudiation of aboriginal rights, the federal government retracted the White Paper plans in 1971.⁸ These

⁶ Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 128-129.

⁷ Barman, *The West Beyond the West*, 309.

⁸ Dickason, *Canada's First Nations*, 386, 388.

developments ran parallel to the planning of BC's three centenaries. This chapter assesses the Committee's response to First Nations and to these currents.

The attempt to recognize increased calls for Native pride and equal participation in the 1966/67 and 1971 celebrations confused centennial organizers whose organizational structure and institutional mindset had been set in the mid 1950s. Organizers were always aware of Native activism and criticism but hoped they would participate in a mass and unified show of reverence to the province by surrendering their political, if not cultural, differences for the occasion. Though organizers argued that First Nations were no different than any other ethnic group participating in the celebrations, they seemed to consider it their responsibility to encourage First Nations artisans, writers and carvers to display their work for centennial consumption. Thus, they actively sought First Nations art and ceremony for their touristic and symbolic value, while simultaneously denying First Nations a political voice.

British Columbia was not alone in this contradiction. Almost a century earlier, Ontarians had confronted a similar dilemma in commemorating their Loyalist heritage. Organizers asked local First Nations to address primarily white audiences in Toronto and Niagara at the 1884 centenary of the Loyalist arrival. The organizers included them to add an element of danger and spectacle to the proceedings; the First Nations used it as a platform to address their inequalities and remind Euro-Canadians of their own claim to the Loyalist past, as allies. As white Ontarians perceived their participation as performance, they easily disregarded the political message of the Native speakers.⁹ By the 1967 federal centenary, the state's relationship with First Nations had changed, but

⁹ Norman Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists: The Ontario Loyalist Tradition and the Creation of Useable Pasts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 85-88.

some paternalism still lingered. This centenary was framed in terms of liberal benevolence and pluralism, but a desire to regulate the participation of First Nations ran parallel with these ideas whereby “Amerindian projects [were used] as promotional events for their own public relations campaigns.”¹⁰ Likewise, First Nations asserted their cultural differences in the context of the wider celebrations. British Columbia Native groups also capitalized on the opportunity centennial presented, even if it was in the form of criticism and boycott.

In organizing and setting out its three centennials the Provincial Committee was originally quite clear as to the role of First Nations. Chapter Four detailed the backdrop to a mythologized pioneering past in which First Nations served in historical events and displays. Perhaps mimicking assimilationist federal policies,¹¹ the organizing Committee expected First Nations to have a silent but supportive role. For instance, the 1958 Centennial Committee did not grant First Nations their own subcommittee or a representative on the Ethnic and Provincial Organizations Subcommittee which was mandated to represent their interests. That Subcommittee was expected to study giving “consideration of the native Indian people ... with special activities in mind.”¹²

This policy continued in community centennial committees and the per capita grant scheme. In an initial memo, Centennial Chairman L.J. Wallace stated that “their

¹⁰ Richard Gordon Kicksee, “Scaled down to Size: Contested Liberal Commonsense and the Negotiation of Indian Participation in the Canadian Centennial Celebrations and Expo’67, 1963-1967” (MA Thesis, Queen’s University, 1995), 65.

¹¹ Brenda Lee Weatherston, “‘Land of the Painted Totem’: Northwest Coast Native Art at the Service of the 1958 British Columbia Centennial” (MA Thesis, University of Victoria, 1998), 13.

¹² British Columbia Centennial Committee, *Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee* (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1959), 46.

treatment [is to] be similar to that of our other citizens of the Province in all respects.”¹³ Therefore, First Nations had to apply for funding for centennial activities through the same channels as non-native communities. The Committee also resisted special First Nations representation in the celebrations. When the Vancouver committee wanted clarification about Native representation, the Central Committee, after seeking the counsel of the Department of Indian Affairs, advised that it would consider “the Indian population as one of the many groups within the province and therefore no special representation was required.”¹⁴ Despite protesting to the contrary, the Centennial Committee contravened its own policies at least in garnering participation, because the very nature of the Indian Act set First Nations apart from the rest of society. It worked closely with the Department of Indian Affairs, who exerted strong pressure on First Nations communities; pressure that was absent in non-native communities. Perhaps as part of an assimilationist tactic, or because of a lack of confidence in Native communities to put on an adequate celebration, the Committee and the DIA encouraged First Nations communities to collaborate on celebrations with neighbouring white and First Nation communities, rather than carrying them out on their own.¹⁵ For example, the DIA urged

¹³ British Columbia Archives (hereafter BCA), British Columbia Centennial '58 Committee (hereafter BCC '58 Committee), GR-1448, Box 7, file: Indians General File, L.J. Wallace to all Indian Superintendents, December 1956.

¹⁴ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 3, BC Centenary Committee Minutes, 14 March 1957.

¹⁵ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 3, BC Centenary Committee Minutes, 13 September 1956, and Box 7, file: Indians General File, L.J. Wallace to all Indian Superintendents, December 1956.

local community committees, such of that of Kitimat, to contact nearby bands, in that case the Kitamaat, and subsume them within the larger community organization.¹⁶

The pressure on Kitimat to work with the Kitamaat is a testament to the Committee's desire to engender mass participation. DIA officials kept in contact with the Committee, updating them on the status of First Nations' participation. For the Committee the news was not positive; Native communities largely did not play along with its ideas. In her study of the use of Native art in the celebrations, Brenda Weatherston maintains that the decision to keep an arm's length from First Nations through the Department of Indian Affairs, made First Nations communities distrustful; they believed that their voices in the celebrations would not be heard.¹⁷ One Superintendent reported that since the communities in his area did not see the celebration as their own, if they participated at all, they would only do so at a local level;¹⁸ another reported that "in spite of [our] best hopes," they would prefer to work on their own.¹⁹

While some First Nations expressed their misgivings about the Centennial through passive inaction, others directly and vociferously communicated their unease individually and through new political organizations. In an oft-quoted letter²⁰ a pseudonymous "Sohany Vulture" asked the Committee in 1957 about Native representation. Perhaps believing that his letter would not merit a response, it played to

¹⁶ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 7, file: Indians General File, L.H. McCance to Kitimat Committee, 4 January 1957.

¹⁷ Weatherston, "Land of the Painted Totem," 25.

¹⁸ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 7, file: Indians General File, J.L. Holman to L.H. McCance, 4 January 1957.

¹⁹ Ibid., F. Earl Anfield to L.H. McCance, 9 January 1957.

²⁰ See Weatherston, "Land of the Painted Totem" and Susan Roy, "Performing Musqueam Culture and History at British Columbia's 1966 Centennial Celebrations," *BC Studies* 135 (Autumn 2002): 55-90.

Euro-Canadian stereotypes by marking the letter as “Indian time” and using “How!” as a salutation. However, he asked a very serious and pertinent question: “who is representing the Indian people?” Apparently he already knew the answer. “I find it sort of crazy that Government people call on some mixed up old ladies, when it comes to our wants instead of calling on us Indians who know what we want.”²¹ Other individuals shared the fear that the white Committee was not taking Native participation and representation seriously. Although supporting the celebrations for what they could teach the public about First Nations culture and progress, Kwakwaka'wakw chief William Scow told government officials that his people should have fuller participation rather than “on a tail end of a parade with a few feathers where the Americans and foreign visitors to the Centennial ceremony will point out and say interesting Indians.”²²

First Nations also launched their criticisms through press campaigns, threatening to undo the 1958 Centennial Committee’s vision of provincial harmony and acquiescence to the celebration. The main voice of this resistance was outspoken Squamish leader Andy Paull, the main personality behind the North American Indian Brotherhood (NAIB).²³ A headline writer derisively captured his opposition to the colonialism implicit in the centenary in a 1956 newspaper headline: “Natives put Indian Sign on Centennial.” After a meeting with the BC Cabinet, Paull announced that over 36,000 First Nations people would boycott the celebrations unless the provincial government settled and paid for the majority of British Columbia’s lands which were not covered by treaty. “I’d be crazy if I took part in celebrations on land which was stolen from me,” Paull said.

²¹ BCA, British Columbia Centennial ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 7 file: Indians General File, Sohany Vulture to Centennial Committee, 16 January 1957.

²² Ibid., William Scow to Lyle Wicks, 12 January 1958.

²³ Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*, 120.

When cabinet insisted that Native land was a federal responsibility, Paull made little distinction between the two levels of government; “you’re all whites.”²⁴ NAIB opposition continued into 1957, but the *Vancouver Province* made light of the situation in a dismissive article “Indians on Warpath over Centennial: Won’t join with ‘Robbers’.” The article was peppered with stereotypes, including that Paull was on the “warpath” with the boycott of the celebrations and that Centennial officials were willing to “smoke the peace pipe” to ensure Native participation. By then, the Confederation of Allied Indian Tribes supported the NAIB; its president Frank Assu told the *Province* “we do not want to help celebrate what we consider the biggest land robbery in the civilization of North America.” Together, Paull and Assu claimed that anyone who celebrated with the committee would be a “traitor” to the Indian people of BC.²⁵ Once they used the centennial to push long-standing issues onto the provincial stage and into public consciousness, others followed suit. For instance, the Tsimshian of the North Coast joined the boycott to protest that land and natural resources had been stolen from them.²⁶

It is important to note, to the relief of the Centennial Committee, that although the First Nations critics of the centenary received much press, they did not speak for all of BC’s Native peoples, nor did they dissuade others from participating. Other First Nations saw value in cooperating and celebrating their cultures by bringing their strength and distinctiveness to non-Native audiences. For instance, the Capilano Reserve planned the “biggest and best” pow-wow for their individual celebrations. Despite also being Squamish, Chief Simon Baker reported, “we don’t want to offend Mr. Paull but we

²⁴ *Victoria Colonist*, 24 October 1956.

²⁵ *Vancouver Province*, 23 February 1957.

²⁶ *Vancouver Sun*, 12 April 1957.

already have made our plans. We know a lot of white men are looking forward to seeing our pow-wow and we don't want to let them down."²⁷ The Committee appreciated Baker's participation and cooperation; he received the British Columbia Centennial Award of Merit in 1958 and again in 1971.²⁸ To be sure, despite Paull's assertion to the contrary, those First Nations peoples who did join in the celebrations could reconcile the contradiction of participating in celebrations that signified their colonization by recognizing the benefits of a welcoming place in which to educate non-Natives about their culture and current situation.

In the planning stages of the federal centenary, the National Indian Council approached the Centennial Commission to highlight Native Indian culture and legend for the occasion.²⁹ Following the lead of their federal counterparts, the 1967 British Columbia Canadian Centennial Committee formed a Native Indian Participation Subcommittee whose job was to "encourage the Native Indians of British Columbia to participate to the full in the Centennial celebrations."³⁰ A majority of the Subcommittee were First Nations with Robert Peter Clifton, a former president of the Native Brotherhood of BC, as Chairperson. The First Nations representatives were pleased with the creation of this Subcommittee. Jim Gallic, representing the Tseshaht Nation of Alberni, welcomed the invitation to participate in the subcommittee because it did much "to help in the understanding between the Indians and the white people." Ross Modeste,

²⁷ *Vancouver Province* 6 March 1957.

²⁸ National Aboriginal Achievement Awards, <http://www.naaf.ca/rec2000.html#2> <February 11, 2005>.

²⁹ *Victoria Daily Colonist*, 28 January 1964.

³⁰ BCA, British Columbia, Canadian Confederation Centennial Committee (hereafter BCCCC Committee), GR-1598, Box 1, file: British Columbia, Provincial Secretary Indian Participation Sub-Committee, Final Report of the Native Indians' Participation Sub-Committee, undated.

representing the Cowichan, complained that the Subcommittee was still celebrating “Canadians first – Indians second,” but that their participation would ensure that “cultures and traditions must be retained for the benefit of the younger generations, both non-whites and whites.”³¹ This Subcommittee reappeared in BC’s 1971 centennial celebration in order “to recommend projects that could be undertaken by the Indian people and which would reflect Indian participation in the Centennial Celebrations.”³²

This Subcommittee surely persuaded more First Nations to become involved in the centennials. In the 1958 centenary, despite the Committee “being most anxious to have the Indian people of the Province participate in the celebrations,”³³ only six bands set up local committees.³⁴ However, in the 1966/67 celebrations thirty-four Native communities participated.³⁵ By 1971, the Committee could rejoice that “most of the 188 Indian Bands throughout the Province are throwing their support behind the local committees in their areas.”³⁶

What had changed in the intervening years? Certainly, Native activism in the 1960s convinced the all-white Board of the Centennial Committee to provide a higher profile to First Nations in the visual and public aspects of the celebrations. Added to this,

³¹ BCA, BCCCC Committee, GR-1598, Box 1, file: British Columbia, Provincial Secretary Indian Participation Sub-Committee, Minutes of the Native Indians’ Participation Sub-Committee meeting, 15 September 1967.

³² BCA, British Columbia Centennial ’71 Committee (hereafter BCC ’71 Committee), GR-1450, Box 45, file: Native Indians’ Participation, Minutes of the Native Indian Participation Sub-Committee meeting, 9 January 1970.

³³ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 7, file: Indians General File, L. McCance to Sohany Vulture, 13 February 1957.

³⁴ *The Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee*, 284.

³⁵ British Columbia Centennial ’71 Committee, *The Celebration of the Century 1871-1971: The Report of the British Columbia Centennial ’71 Committee* (Victoria BC, 1973), 41.

³⁶ *BC Centennial ’71 Spokesman*, April 1970, 4.

British Columbians and other non-Native Canadians were influenced by the more pluralistic attitudes of the day, and were concerned about the governments' inadequate response to the barriers First Nations faced in Canadian society. These currents appeared within the discourses surrounding Native participation in BC's centennials. Many non-Natives urged the Committee to do more for the First Nations of BC. In 1958, several non-Native persons urged the Centennial Committee to do something for the Native residents of B.C. who were overlooked by mainstream society in, as one writer puts it, their "100 years of Subjection."³⁷ However, the suggestions put forth often replicated the same image of First Nations as "spectacle" that they criticized. One correspondent perceptively noted that "whites" have unquestionably used Native imagery and heraldic symbols "for propaganda purposes, and our own gain." But he tried to convince the committee to send a number of war canoes to Great Britain where they "would get a great thrill, could they witness such racing." Further, he suggested sending a small display of BC Native arts as a "token exhibit...purely incidental to the visit of B.C. Indians."³⁸ Similarly, another correspondent objectified Native peoples by suggesting an appropriate project would be to supply a "dusky oyster white bridal gown" to a bride on each reservation. Although the suggestion for an off-white gown indicates a negative view of Native female sexuality³⁹ the writer concluded by pronouncing "this might prove a tender touch from the Pale Face to the Native."⁴⁰

³⁷ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 7, file: Suggestions, Eileen Kerr to L.J. Wallace, 25 January 1958.

³⁸ Ibid., G.D. Sprot to L.J. Wallace, undated.

³⁹ See Jean Barman, "Taming Aboriginal Sexuality: Gender, Power and Race in British Columbia, 1850-1900," *BC Studies* 115-116 (1997-98): 237-266.

⁴⁰ BCA, BCC '58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 7, file: Suggestions, Eileen Kerr to L.J. Wallace, 25 January 1958.

The suggestions given to the Committee in the two later centennials, and corresponding newspaper coverage, demonstrate a perceptible shift in white attitudes towards First Nations. To be sure, some of the same attitudes persisted - particularly on the part of the Centennial Committee - but many correspondents wanted to embrace non-commodified First Nations culture and acknowledge the travails of colonization and their part in it, and in so doing, mend the relationship between Natives and non-Natives. Vancouver alderman Aeneas McB Bell-Irving suggested as much when he wrote to the Lieutenant Governor in 1966 advocating the Province give amnesty to all imprisoned Natives since they may have committed acts deemed by the colonizers as crimes, but “it is we who err in our hearts and have not known God’s ways – not them.”⁴¹ Likewise, another correspondent pointed out the ignorance of dominant society towards First Nations and complained that “the Indian point of view...simply isn’t conveyed by a desultory study of their history and artifacts conducted by a Caucasian,” therefore First Nations elders should teach their culture in elementary schools on a weekly basis.⁴²

Some British Columbians suggested using centennial celebrations to lessen the disparity of wealth between mainstream society and BC Aboriginals that had been revealed in the Hawthorn report. Recognizing the elaborate ways British Columbians had celebrated the previous centennials, one citizen asserted that “we ‘whites’ have had our turn [and] will have trouble racking our brain for something we haven’t got.” She suggested a list of substantive civic projects, such as improving medical facilities to benefit material conditions on reserves as a way of celebrating the 1971 centennial and

⁴¹ BCA, Canadian Confederation Centennial Committee (hereafter CCC Committee), GR-1449, Box 18, file: Suggested Provincial Projects, Aeneas McB Bell-Irving to G.R. Pearkes, Lieutenant Governor, undated.

⁴² *Vancouver Sun*, 31 October 1966.

thereby creating “an opportunity for civic groups to get to know their Indian counterparts and to work hand in hand with them, thus generating good will.”⁴³ Four years earlier, John Tisdalle, the Social Credit Member of the Legislature for Saanich, reminded W.A.C. Bennett that “the Indians [sic] standard of living is in most cases falling farther and farther behind the white man’s, with the rapid increase in the cost of living.” He warned that “red power” would let the opposition N.D.P. “sow their seeds of discord and distrust.” He recommended an urban housing program for BC’s aboriginals.⁴⁴ These letters demonstrate that citizens in British Columbia were receptive to policy directed to benefiting First Nations.

Despite the resistance of Native communities and people to become involved, in its final report for the first centenary the Committee heralded their participation, reporting that, “it was most gratifying that the native Indians participated whole-heartedly and enthusiastically in the celebrations. They cooperated in a variety of ways, in parades, in the Fraser Brigade, and in the arrival of the *S.S. Commodore* – to name but a few events.”⁴⁵ These events, of course, tilted towards the spectacular and required the presence of First Nations only as background. This seemed to be the extent of their physical participation in provincial centennial events that the Committee deemed appropriate. However, the reproduction and proliferation of Native arts, particularly

⁴³ BCA, BCC ’71 Committee, GR-1450, Box 10, file: Ideas, Centennial ’71 (suggestions), Jean A. Pike to L.J. Wallace, undated.

⁴⁴ Simon Fraser University Archives (hereafter SFU), W.A.C. Bennett Papers, F-55-28-0-12, file: Letters, telegrams 1954-1969, John D. Tisdalle to W.A.C. Bennett, 22 August 1967.

⁴⁵ *The Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee*, 284. The *S.S. Commodore* was one of the first paddle steamers to transport gold seekers from San Francisco to Victoria in April of 1858. The Committee recreated the voyage 100 years later.

totem poles, in the name of promoting the centenary was encouraged.⁴⁶ One of the most celebrated and newsworthy projects was the one hundred foot totem pole carved by Chief Mungo Martin to present to Queen Elizabeth II on the occasion of BC's birthday.

Certainly the use of totems for the purposes of tourist promotion was neither new nor uncommon. In *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture*, Daniel Francis asserts that "while Native people venerate totem poles for social and historical reasons, many non-Natives apparently share a more superstitious belief that poles have the power to make people stop and spend their money."⁴⁷ In BC, totem poles also distinguished British Columbia from other regions competing for tourist dollars. Although commonly used as a provincial symbol, totem poles are part of the cultures of coastal First Nations. Traditionally interior, and even some coastal groups, did not carve totems. But into the mid-twentieth century, the association of totems with British Columbia's First Nations became fixed in tourist's minds. Before the 1920s, nary a mention of aboriginal peoples can be found in early tourist literature, as tourism promoters were boosters preoccupied with selling economic opportunities in the province.⁴⁸ However, after the Canadian National Railways took over the newly completed Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, whose tracks cut through much of Gitksan territory in the Skeena Valley, it undertook a restoration project to ensure the preservation of the poles which it hoped would be a foundation for a tourist railway package – the

⁴⁶ See Brenda Weatherston, "Land of the Painted Totem" regarding the reproduction of totem motifs on centennial posters.

⁴⁷ Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992), 186.

⁴⁸ Michael Dawson, *Selling British Columbia: Tourism and Consumer Culture, 1890-1970*. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 163.

railway to “totem-pole land.”⁴⁹ Promoters in British Columbia followed suit during the Depression by marketing the uniqueness of Northwest Coast culture and totems as “uncommon” and “foreign” enough to capture the interests of American travelers. This idea became well established in the 1940s and 1950s since the British Columbia Government Travel Bureau used totems widely, particularly in its promotional films. The film *Vancouver Island: British Columbia’s Island Playground*, produced in 1942 described the totems in Victoria’s Thunderbird Park as “weird” originating from “an ancient and mysterious people.” By the time that *Vancouver Island* was updated in 1964, “weird” totems had evolved to “our” totems; in appropriating the totem as a symbol of BC “native history here had been almost fully domesticated and cleansed of its complexity.”⁵⁰ Furthermore, the transfer of totems from their original locations of First Nations’ importance to largely Euro-Canadian urban centers signified a “disassocia[ti]on of] the Native from the totem pole completely, which could then assume new emblematic meanings.”⁵¹

Vancouver tourist promoters and civic officials were the greatest agitators for the adoption of the totem as a symbol for British Columbia. In the 1950s, Vancouver Mayor Charles E. Thompson and Greater Vancouver Tourist Association Director and Vancouver Parks Board Director, Harry Duker, were the President and Secretary-treasurer respective of the “Totem-Land Society,” of which Duker was the driving

⁴⁹ David Darling and Douglas Cole, “Totem Pole Restoration on the Skeena, 1925-30: An Early Exercise in Heritage Conservation,” *BC Studies* 47 (Autumn 1980): 29-48.

⁵⁰ Dawson, *Selling British Columbia*, 164 – 165.

⁵¹ Aldona Jonaitis, “Northwest Coast Totem Poles,” in *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds*, eds. Ruth B. Phillips and Christopher B. Steiner (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 112.

force.⁵² While the society's objectives included dissemination of Native culture, and the preservation of Native arts "to advance, encourage and support the British Columbia Indians in overcoming the obstacles that stand in the way of their attainment to responsibility, and enjoyment of full citizenship," their actions indicate they were more interested in their stated aim: "to promote the use of the insignia of the Thunderbird Totem and the slogan "Totem-Land."⁵³ Duker continually pressed for the use of totems and native imagery as symbols of BC "in place of what he saw as unnecessarily vague alternatives" and suggested the Greater Vancouver Tourist Association adopt the "Totem-Land" slogan as a tourist draw. When the government imprinted "Beautiful British Columbia" on 1964 license plates, Duker asserted this phrase was not descriptive of British Columbia, whereas "Totem-Land" was.⁵⁴

The aims of the Totem-Land Society also infected BC's centennial. Duker must have been overjoyed with the press that came from the creation of Martin's pole, and the honouring of the Queen with this gift. Although the provincial government seemed to be already carrying out its work, the society wanted to ensure its aims were spread throughout the centennial. When the Centennial Committee notified the Vancouver committee, of which Duker was an appointed member, that a half-scale replica of Mungo Martin's Centenary Totem was available, the Vancouver committee was anxious to have

⁵² Dawson, *Selling British Columbia*, 166.

⁵³ Nanaimo Community Archives (hereafter NCA), Civic Boards and Committees, 1992-011-C, Box 6: BC Centennial Committee 1957-1958, file: Totem poles, Letterhead on Totem-Land Society.

⁵⁴ Dawson, *Selling British Columbia*, 166-167.

it despite the prohibitive cost of approximately \$5000.00 and ancillary fees.⁵⁵ The Vancouver committee - perhaps asserting the reputation it had built up over the last decade as a repository for the province's totems for tourist consumption – passed a motion (seconded by Duker) requesting that the province pay for and erect it in “Vancouver as the most appropriate city in which to place it for centennial.”⁵⁶ On being turned down, the committee scrambled for a partner to bear half of the costs, but eventually had to bear the costs alone. Its totem pole committee, which included Duker, put the pole at Kitsilano – the site of Vancouver's per capita project, the Maritime Museum.⁵⁷

When the city of Nanaimo announced its centennial project would be a behemoth birthday cake,⁵⁸ Duker as the Secretary Treasurer of the Totem-Land Society saw an opportunity to further the society's aims. He suggested using totem poles in the decoration as a “reminder of crown colony days and ...a tribute to the early inhabitants of our beautiful province, as well as being symbolic of 1958, in as much as totems are used extensively in contemporary commercial trade names.”⁵⁹ As the Nanaimo centennial committee had already planned to include such historical scenes as a traditional “Indian Village” on the cake, it welcomed the Society's suggestion and its financial contribution

⁵⁵ City of Vancouver Archives (hereafter CVA), BC Centennial Committee fonds, MSS 178, file 7: Centennial Totem Pole 1957-58, H. Merilees to Mr. P.B. Stroyan, Superintendent Parks Board, 5 February 1957.

⁵⁶ Ibid., Norah Scott, Vancouver Centennial Committee Executive Secretary to L.J. Wallace, 18 February 1957.

⁵⁷ Ibid., H. Merilees to L.J. Wallace, 8 March 1957; Tom Howarth to Norah Scott, 24 May 1957; Norah Scott to L.J. Wallace, 17 March 1957. See Chapter Three for further information about the Maritime Museum.

⁵⁸ See Chapter Three for a discussion of this project.

⁵⁹ NCA, Civic Boards and Committees, 1992-011-C, Box 6, file: Totem Poles Centennial Cake, Harry Duker, Secretary-Treasurer Totem-Land Society to city editor, Nanaimo Free Press, 13 November 1956.

to ensure that sugar totem poles appeared on the cake.⁶⁰ With the aims of the society in mind, Duker originally wanted all of the forty-eight sugar totems separating the layers of the cake to be replications of their logo, the thunderbird totem.⁶¹ However the Nanaimo committee decided this was to be a birthday cake for all of British Columbia, and that “to further the complete representation of various parts of the province” it must use “many other designs” of totem poles as well as the Totem-Land Society totem.⁶² In this whole planning phase, it is important to note that there was never any suggestion of consulting with the people whose cultural heritage included the totem pole. In fact, the original correspondence from the Society indicates it thought totem poles were just as much a legacy of the early colonial history of British Columbia, and a commercial symbol, as of pre-contact and First Nations’ history. In such use of Native imagery, tourism historian Michael Dawson notes that “the complexities of colonization (not to mention the sobering impact of decolonization) were nowhere to be seen in promotional literature, in historically themed hotel dining rooms, or on vehicle license plates” and apparently not on historically-themed gigantic birthday cakes either.⁶³ After rejecting the generic, stereotypical Totem-Land totem as the sole totem represented on the cake in favour of variety, the Nanaimo committee referred the confectionary chef to photographs from G.H. Raley’s book *Our Totem Poles* rather than seek input from First Nations.

The idea that totem poles could be created, consumed and digested by non-Native British Columbians as an item of colonial conquest, did not fade in the later centennials,

⁶⁰ NCA, Civic Boards and Committees, 1992-011-C, Box 6, file: Totem Poles Centennial Cake, Harry Duker to George Molecey, 22 November 1956 and 4 December 1956.

⁶¹ Ibid., Harry Duker to George Molecey, 2 April 1957.

⁶² Ibid., George Molecey to Harry Duker, 12 April 1957.

⁶³ Dawson, *Selling British Columbia*, 167.

even with more representation and provincial events by First Nations and greater sensitivity towards their participation. The tourist potential of BC's totems and their misrepresentation in the 1958 centennial set a precedent for public acceptance of the appropriation and distortion of totems. One of the more interesting and recurring centennial suggestions was to construct a massive "steel and cement" lookout tower in the form of a totem pole in a Vancouver location.⁶⁴ A proponent of this idea wrote to the Vancouver centennial committee that Vancouver had no "Eiffel tower" and "what better way to personify and proclaim our history, folk-lore and indeed our very heritage." He proposed that the viewing tower should take the form of a thunderbird to accommodate a restaurant in one of the wings.⁶⁵ Another advocate of the idea claimed that "every American I know, connects BC with Totems & Indians, I'm sure they would visit Vancouver by the thousands to see a Totem that large."⁶⁶ Not dissuaded by the failure of earlier Centennial Committees to adopt his idea, this supporter pressed the same idea in 1970 on Vancouver Mayor Tom Campbell. He closed his letter by referring to the furor over the White Paper: "with the Indian issue so strong in the papers now, Ottawa would think kindly on anything that would be a boost to them and the Totem Pole would do so a great deal."⁶⁷

While Vancouver never followed through on this suggestion, the province recognized the draw of totems for tourists. In 1966 it sought to make BC's totems more

⁶⁴ CVA, City Council and Office of the City Clerk Fonds, Series 27, file: Project Proposals, Arthur Stamm to A.E. Bell-Irving, Chairman Vancouver Centennial Committee, undated.

⁶⁵ Ibid., W.G. Grant to A.E. Bell-Irving, 6 May 1965.

⁶⁶ Ibid., Jack Wotton to A.E. Bell-Irving, 3 May 1965.

⁶⁷ CVA, City Council and Office of the City Clerk fonds, Series 20, file 2, Jack Wotton to Mayor Campbell, 16 June 1970.

accessible to the public than in 1958. What better way to do that than by marking the province's ferry terminals with commemorative totems, meshing Euro-Canadian views of Native culture with those of traveling tourists?

This project appealed to the province since it had already established totems as a secondary symbol of the centennial with the publicity and pomp over the Queen's gift of the Martin pole, not to mention the prominence given to the Nanaimo birthday cake. Furthermore, this project fit the increased energy spent on tourist promotion in the 1960s. The government could hope that tourists drawn to BC by the centennial celebration would plan to see all of the commemorative totems. An equally important impetus was to engender more Native participation than in 1958 by appealing to the specific nations on whose land the provincial ferry terminal system resided. Finally, the project would be an opportunity to fund burgeoning Native arts⁶⁸ of which all British Columbians could be proud. Wilson Duff, an anthropologist and supervisor for the undertaking, noted that it "would help the local Indians to revive and perpetuate their native customs."⁶⁹

While the intent was there for local nations to carve the poles which were to be erected in their historical territory, centennial organizers could not quite get over the homogenizing tendencies of past cultural producers and of tourist promoters, such as

⁶⁸ At the time, Euro-Canadians largely believed that Northwest Coast Native Art had barely survived the twentieth century, and that the totems and carvings produced in mid-century paled in comparison to immediate post-contact forms. In his book *Tales of Ghosts: First Nations Art in British Columbia, 1922 – 61* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003), Ronald W. Hawker exposes this myth, arguing that the mid-twentieth century was not a wasteland for native arts, rather government restrictions and the effects of colonization initiated a turn away from classic styles as part of "processes of identity construction and boundary marking both among individual First Nations groups and with regards to Canada's national identity", 5.

⁶⁹ *Delta Optimist*, 3 August 1966 quoted in Susan Roy, "Performing Musqueam Culture and History," 75.

Duker, that one style, that of the North Coast and specifically the Haida, represented totems in British Columbia. The Haida carved the most elaborate and intricate poles, and as a result of the attention paid to them in the earliest period of colonization, began carving miniature argillite poles for European consumption in the 1820s.⁷⁰ It is ironic that in the context of “Indian” symbols in Canada as a whole, and a mythologized Hollywood stereotype, the only well-known things about North Coast and Haida culture were their totems - a natural, then, for the tourist-seeking centennials. Another British Columbian pitied this approach, arguing that if the organizers wanted “local color” [sic], “why not print some pictures of young men and women of the Haidas, Tsimsyan, Kwakiutl, Nootka etc wearing the old ceremonial dress that truly belongs to us?”⁷¹

Nevertheless, the Centennial Committee privileged Haida-style art and culture in the celebrations. In the third centennial, the Tourist Promotion and Hospitality Subcommittee specifically singled out “‘Haida’ Indian Participation” as a tie in to the “historical theme of ’71.”⁷² In fact the “Route of the Totems” was known as the “Route of the Haida” as late as 1965,⁷³ and planning insiders still referred to it as such as late as the spring of 1966.⁷⁴ Wilson Duff of the Provincial Museum was the primary figure in charge of this project. Originally he wanted the route to signify the post-contact trading

⁷⁰Jonaitis, “Northwest Coast Totem Poles,” 107. Daniel Francis mentions a recent example of the value placed on Haida art forms with Bill Reid’s “Spirit of Haida G’waii” chosen to grace the entrance at the Canadian embassy in Washington D.C. “It must be assumed that a sculpture in such a prestigious public place is intended not only a work of art but more than that, a symbol for Canada itself.” *The Imaginary Indian*, 187.

⁷¹*Vancouver Province*, 5 March 1958.

⁷²BCA, Provincial Secretary, G91-030, Minutes Tourist Promotion and Hospitality Sub Committee, 24 February 1970.

⁷³*Victoria Colonist*, 26 October 1965.

⁷⁴BCA, CCC Committee, GR-1449, Box 74, file: Nanaimo, City of, R.J. McInnes, Director, Indian Advisory Act to Frank Ney, Chairman Nanaimo Centennial Committee, 31 March 1966.

route of the Haida from Haida Gwaii to Victoria, comparing the new sleek ferry system with the “traditional Haida canoe.”⁷⁵ Since the ferries plied waters not traveled by the Haida, the name was changed to the “Route of the Totems.” Despite the name change historical inaccuracies persisted. Several groups, such as the Musqueam, traditionally did not carve totem poles, but were asked to carve the twelve-foot poles supplied by the Committee according to their traditional motifs. At the ceremonial unveiling of their pole at the Tsawassen ferry terminal, the Musqueam moved “from participation to protest” of the government’s decision to exalt northern coastal groups as the representatives of “Indianess” in British Columbia. Through dance and speeches, they asserted local history and protested the revision of post-contact, Native history.⁷⁶ Although the Indian Participation Subcommittee considered this project a success because it allowed the First Nations carver to demonstrate “he is capable of carrying out” such a project which “revived Indian culture” and brought about “a greater friendship between Indian and non-Indian,” the drive to homogenize under a single coastal narrative did not allow for full Native participation and expression. For instance, local community committees, not the bands, were charged with organizing the unveiling ceremonies. In Nanaimo, local Chairman Frank Ney had to be reminded that “the Indian residents of the area where the pole is to be erected be requested to play a prominent role in the ceremony.” The Committee commissioned twenty Native carvers all around the province to carve the standard twelve-foot, three and a half feet in diameter poles with the directive to allow for

⁷⁵ Susan Roy, “Performing Musqueam Culture,” 72.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 76.

“an upright grizzly bear as the dominant figure.”⁷⁷ Musqueam Band Manager Willard Sparrow told the media that the government should have used full-sized totems if they were to be used at all.⁷⁸

In 1971 the Indian Participation Subcommittee deemed a carving competition of standard sixteen-foot high totems its special project. These totems were then presented to Ottawa and all of the provincial and territorial capitals to commemorate the entry of British Columbia into Confederation.⁷⁹ While the competition attracted renowned carvers, Tony Hunt, the grandson of Mungo Martin, did not enter because he thought the judges lacked the expertise to judge the poles according to traditional styles and he was uneasy because established artists, such as Bill Reid, had not entered. He supposed that Reid and others probably felt “that sufficiently high standards may not be set which will result in a number of second-rate poles.”⁸⁰ Despite the concern of some artists that the competition was only a corollary to the main project of supplying totems as a symbol of BC, the Centennial Committee and much of the public (both Native and non-Native), believed that these projects recognized First Nations contributions to BC society and provided a platform for the revival of Native arts, and thus, their society. To this end, most of the other projects organized and sponsored by the committee geared towards Native participation involved arts and oratory about traditional themes and current socio-economic circumstances, but denied the expression of current political aims.

⁷⁷ BCA, CCC Committee, GR-1449, Box 74, file: Nanaimo, City of, R.J. McInnes to Frank Ney, 31 March 1966.

⁷⁸ Roy, “Performing Musqueam Culture and History,” 76.

⁷⁹ The Celebration of the Century 1871-1971, 39.

⁸⁰ BCA, BCC '71 Committee, GR-1450, Box 28, file: Totem Poles (Native Indians), Tony Hunt to L.J. Wallace, 4 June 1970.

Various subcommittees made a point of singling out the position of First Nations in BC, and proposed ways to carry out projects for their benefit, without consulting them. Few of these projects, however, were completed. In the early planning stages for Centennial '71 the Native Indian Participation Subcommittee stressed the "need to honor the great native Indian leaders of the past." The original plan was to forge a new provincial history and stimulate Native pride by publicizing the achievements of "native warriors, sports figures, politicians and community leaders [that] are virtually unknown to the Indian population of this Province."⁸¹ Except for the case of Dan George (below) there is little evidence they were successful in this. In the same vein, the newly formed Women's Activities Subcommittee felt it had a place to aid BC's First Nations by spearheading "a sort of Centennial Sisterhood of organizations to give assistance in every possible way to the preservation of native culture." The sole Native woman on the Subcommittee pointed out that they had "a society of their own devoted to this type of activity," but discussion of the Centennial Sisterhood persisted, although it never came to fruition.⁸² Although both examples suggest that these primarily white committees felt responsible to do something for the preservation and adulation of Native culture, they were after all taking their cue from First Nations who were demanding a more prominent place in the centennials and in society. However, First Nations wanted to control their level of participation. For instance, in 1970 when Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau announced that the Federal Government would grant ten million dollars to British Columbia on the occasion of its centennial of joining Canada, Native leaders and the

⁸¹ BCA, Provincial Secretary, G91-030, Minutes of the Native Indian Participation Subcommittee meeting, 20 February 1970.

⁸² Ibid., Minutes of the Women's Activities Subcommittee, 18 February 1970.

North American Indian Brotherhood of BC requested funds for a cultural museum where, rather than “collecting dust,” artifacts could be appreciated by the people of British Columbia and Native youth could learn of their heritage.⁸³

The Committee and Native leaders also recognized that Native youth could learn and appreciate their culture through observing arts and artifacts and could continue the legacy by producing art and writing themselves. To this end, in 1966 the Subcommittee organized a province-wide “Centennial Contest for Indian Students” whereby First Nations school children were encouraged to participate. The letter sent to schools to motivate teachers to arrange class projects with this in mind, suggested “a retelling of the legends which their parents and grandparents can recount for them, through an expression of their traditional arts or by a reviving of these arts as the expression of their personal feelings and insights.”⁸⁴ This idea was recycled from 1958, despite it being an utter failure then with only three entries.⁸⁵ The greater acceptance by both the Committee and First Nations groups of working together, as well as the higher profile of Native arts and pride in their culture, were likely factors that generated an astonishing 651 entries. Judge George Clutesi pronounced that so many submissions were “real evidence that there would be a tomorrow for Indian arts.” The chairman of this project from the Community Programs Branch, Al Carter told the press that the project’s aim was to “encourage Indian youth to develop pride in their country by an awareness of their cultural contributions to

⁸³ *Nanaimo Daily Free Press*, 27 October 1970 and CVA, City Council and Office of the City Clerk fonds, Series 20, file: Centennial project, Wilbur T. Campbell, President North American Indian Brotherhood of BC to P.E. Trudeau, 10 August 1970.

⁸⁴ BCA, CCC Committee, GR-1449, Box 37, file: Indian Contest Educational, Department of education form letter, undated.

⁸⁵ *Victoria Daily Times*, 22 August 1966, and BCA, CCC Committee, GR-1449, Box 37, file: Indian Contest Educational, draft news release, undated.

it.”⁸⁶ One reason for the success of the project was an increasing political awareness and outspokenness among Native youth about their marginalization. Carter himself chose a poem written by a then-unknown 18-year old Penticton high school student to highlight the caliber of contributions. In her poem, entitled “Integration – do we want it?” Jeanette Armstrong, later author of the ground-breaking novel *Slash* and First Nations activist and educator, wrote:

Beneath the pressure
 of ever increasing white
 still a few cling
 to once rustling limb,
 now bleak and naked.
 Soon, soon among
 the white they
 will fall and mingle:
 gone, gone forever,
 golden red leaves.⁸⁷

The draft news release strongly suggested the government’s willingness to embrace Native cultural contributions and to bear some blame for their poor socio-economic conditions, but in so doing, to close its eyes to the political aspirations of First Nations. Carter was quoted as saying “you find running through almost all the writings these youngsters sent us a gentle sense of sadness at losing their separate identity; but little or no resentment. *It is apparent that most accept the inevitability of integration and*

⁸⁶ *Victoria Daily Times*, 16 August 1966.

⁸⁷ BCA, CCC Committee, GR-1449, Box 37, file: Indian Contest Educational, draft news release, undated.

welcome opportunities for advancement such as those offered by the provincial government.”⁸⁸ This second sentence was crossed out on the draft, perhaps indicating that Carter and the project organizers decided this was no longer an acceptable or widely held view. Thus, despite the higher profile accorded to First Nations since the 1958 centennial, and the changing attitudes of some white British Columbians, the BC government and its Centennial Committee still had an assimilationist bent as it pertained to the political status of First Nations in BC. It is likely that as a result of working with First Nations in producing and promoting Native arts and culture during the centennials, the BC government came to a greater understanding of their socio-economic needs, and valued their artistic contributions to the province. As a result, after the national centennial, the W.A.C. Bennett government instituted the First Citizens Fund, “to contribute support to projects involved with the advancement and expansion of the culture, education, economic circumstances and position of persons” of Aboriginal descent who were born in the province and reside there.⁸⁹ While it funded the arts and projects for community and economic development, the fund could not be used for long-term projects, capital improvements, or legal fees, presumably so the government would not find itself in a position of funding a land claims case against itself. By late 1971, 513 projects of a cultural or economic nature were funded totaling over two million dollars.⁹⁰

The desire to acknowledge the socio-economic effects of colonization also led centennial organizers to give a platform to legendary Squamish Chief Dan George, who

⁸⁸ Ibid., emphasis added.

⁸⁹ BCA, British Columbia, Premier’s Records, 1953-1972, GR-1414, Box 125, file: First Citizens Fund, First Citizens Fund document, undated. This fund still exists with roughly the same mandate.

⁹⁰ SFU, W.A.C. Bennett Papers, F55-50-0-20, D.R.J. Campbell, Chairman First Citizens Fund, to K.R. Mylea, secretary to Premier, 29 October 1971.

was known to white Canadians through his stage work and his role on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's Western series *Cariboo Country*. In Vancouver, the local committee's major celebration was a huge variety show at Empire Stadium. In 1967, it invited Chief Dan George to deliver a soliloquy – "Lament for Confederation" - which the *Vancouver Sun* designated "bitter and moving" since it dealt with the advances white Canadians had made since Confederation, while he and his people had an alien culture "pressed down upon me until I could no longer breathe." Despite the disappearance of the buffalo, the loss of forests and fish, and the loss of Native authority, Chief George affirmed that with the education, skills and tools of the 'white man,' "I shall build my race into the proudest segment of your society" where "the *next* hundred years [will] be the greatest in the proud history of our tribes and nations."⁹¹

Despite Chief Dan George's assertion in 1967 that this was not his, nor any aboriginals' celebration, the Vancouver committee was eager to nab him to play a prominent role in 1971's Centennial show. Surely George's newfound celebrity was a factor. The year before he had starred in *Little Big Man* as Old Lodge Skins opposite Dustin Hoffman. For his work, George received an Academy Award nomination for best supporting actor. But, as part of the previous centennial's show he had touched the emotions of British Columbians, many of whom felt the gravity of his message and a responsibility to recognize it. One Vancouver couple felt so strongly about it that they asked Premier Bennett to recognize Dan George in some way since "who amongst us will ever forget his magnificent soliloquy on the occasion of our 1st of July Confederation

⁹¹ *Vancouver Sun*, 4 July 1967.

celebration? No Bitterness, just the cry of a man for his people.”⁹² The Vancouver committee of course, shared these sentiments. The chairman of that committee, Stuart Keate, the publisher of the *Vancouver Sun*, reported that having Chief Dan George participate was a “must” since his moving, eloquent orations are “a moment to make us all think deeply amid the gaiety.”⁹³ And, after George had delivered his speech at the 1971 event, at least one of the nearly 19,000 people present thought that “the chief’s speech was the highlight of the evening.”⁹⁴

Certainly, it was billed as such. His appearance at the Empire Stadium event – entitled “The Day we Joined: A Confederation Celebration” - was so anticipated that the committee decided the cover of the program guide should “feature a colored [sic] picture of Chief Dan George and possibly Sir John A. Macdonald.”⁹⁵ Since John A. Macdonald seemed to be an afterthought, his appearance on the program was dropped in favour of a single headshot of Chief Dan George. Given the focus on Dan George, ten members of his family chanting and drumming accompanied his speech. The Vancouver committee, as a sign of respect for their guest who had “received a great deal of publicity as an individual,” stressed that publicity should mention “Chief Dan and family.”⁹⁶ On the night of his speech, the stadium was packed, but as the George family took the stage the show took on a “serious note.” According to the press, Chief George “made an impassioned plea for help from British Columbians in helping the Indian regain his place

⁹² BCA, Premier’s Records, 1953-1972, GR-1414, Box 126, file: 6 GL-GZ, Mr. and Mrs. S.C. Gordon to W.A.C. Bennett, 18 April 1971.

⁹³ *Vancouver Sun*, 14 July 1971.

⁹⁴ *Vancouver Sun*, 3 August 1971.

⁹⁵ CVA, British Columbia Centennial ‘71 Committee, MSS 118, file: 6, Minutes of Confederation Celebration planning committee, 16 March 1971.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 10 May 1971.

in society.” Like “Lament for Confederation,” this speech also compared the gulf between white British Columbians and the First Nations. George asked, “Why are we called Indians and you Canadians? Why is it that we who once owned this land are now marred by the highest unemployment rate, the highest school dropout rate and the lowest income rate?”⁹⁷ The draft of this speech presented to the Vancouver centennial committee suggests that the reference to ownership of land was almost deleted. An unidentified committee member crossed out the second question and marked it with a large question mark but the reference remained.⁹⁸ While the centennial organization and the attendees at the two Empire Stadium shows welcomed the opportunity to mourn a culture almost lost, the suggestion of stolen land clashed with the celebration of BC’s unity and provincehood.

Denying First Nations their rich history in the province was yet another way to limit the expression of Native political aims in 1958. Certainly Native leaders wished to gain a level of recognition during the centenaries as Canada’s original peoples. For the 1958 centenary, Alert Bay’s Chief William Scow wrote to the Committee that it presented “a great opportunity to portray to the public” the contributions of Aboriginals. He suggested some form of visual diorama in Victoria, which would first portray “the way Natives lived [and] were happy,” then move onto the first meetings with the colonial government or whites and the impacts of colonialism on First Nations, ending with a scene of “the Progress made by a few Natives.”⁹⁹ Of course, the Committee adopted no

⁹⁷ *Prince George Citizen*, 21 July 1971.

⁹⁸ CVA, British Columbia Centennial ’71 Committee, MSS 118, file: 7, Chief Dan George’s draft speech, undated.

⁹⁹ BCA, BCC ’58 Committee, GR-1448, Box 7, file: Indians General, William Scow to Lyle Wicks, 12 January 1958.

such presentation; it welcomed Native participation in historical dramas, but its focus was not on Aboriginal history. As the level of Native participation increased with each centennial, it would follow that Native leaders would receive a fuller representation of their history. However, this was not to be. In matters dealing with the province's history, the Committee was keenly aware of potential controversies. In 1971, they avoided such spectacular recreations as the Fraser Brigade of 1958. In fact, the Central Committee repeatedly turned down subcommittee proposals for a US-produced Wild West show due to historical inaccuracies, and because "the present mood of Canadian Indians was not favourable."¹⁰⁰ In the context of wide press coverage of the Red Power movement in the United States and the furor at home over the White Paper¹⁰¹ the Committee decided "it would not be wise to stumble on in trouble [,] innocent as it might be."¹⁰²

Yet, the Committee did not seek a more balanced written history. Denying First Nations their rich history in the province dampened political claims. As Chapters Three and Four explain, in the presentation of BC's history during the Centennials, particularly 1958, the role of First Nations was virtually overlooked in favour of a whitewashed western and frontier history. The inclusion of First Nations in local histories was problematic at best, with the Committee counseling local authors to mention the livelihood of First Nations before the first "permanent" white settlements. But the fact that the 1958 Centennial's crowning contribution to the province's historiography,

¹⁰⁰ BCA, Provincial Secretary, G91-030, Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting, 26 August 1970.

¹⁰¹ See Dickason, *Canada's First Nations*, 385-388.

¹⁰² BCA, BCC '71 Committee, GR-1450, Box 7, file: Community Activities, L.J. Wallace to Frank Bernard, 22 September 1970.

Margaret Ormsby's *British Columbia: A History*, also almost wholly neglects First Nations speaks to something more than casual indifference.

Ormsby, a History professor at the University of British Columbia, was selected in 1956 over other historians to write the provincial history since she was "a fluent writer, she had just been promoted to full professor and was hitting her stride as an historian."¹⁰³ The Committee deemed it time for the writing of a new, scholarly, and readable provincial history since the last one had been written over forty years previous. *British Columbia: A History* covered the complete history of the province, with a focus on the one hundred years since colonial status.¹⁰⁴

The Committee was "eminently satisfied" with the work which received 1959's American Association for State and Local History Award¹⁰⁵ and was well-received by reviewers. W. Kaye Lamb, a former BC provincial archivist and historian in his own right, praised it for being "both a notable centennial publication and a study that will remain a standard reference for many years to come."¹⁰⁶ In a retrospective of Ormsby's work, John Norris, a former student and later colleague of Ormsby, held *British Columbia* in high regard for its strong, smooth narrative form, which "provided a firm bases on which future historians could build," and for its contribution to the knowledge

¹⁰³ There were relatively few actively working BC historians at the time that could have written a general history in the two years provided. Apparently, Walter Sage had expected to get the commission, but the Committee feared that his age and ill health would interfere with the timeline. Chad Reimer, "The Making of British Columbia History: Historical Writing and Institutions, 1784-1958" (Ph.D. diss, York, 1995), 384.

¹⁰⁴ *Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee*, 137.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 138 and Nina Napier, "British Columbia: A Bibliography of Centennial Publications, 1957-1959," *BC Historical Quarterly* 1-4 (January-October 1957-58), 200.

¹⁰⁶ W. Kaye Lamb, "Review, British Columbia: A History," *BC Historical Quarterly* 1-4 (January-October 1957-58), 221.

of the twentieth century.¹⁰⁷ While it was a remarkable achievement, contemporary readers will note that Ormsby barely mentions First Nations in her narrative at all. The index only references “Indians” 14 times in a text that runs to almost 500 pages.¹⁰⁸ And unlike the local histories written in the same year, *British Columbia* does not begin with any pre-contact history, only mentioning First Nations at contact in their relations with James Cook, Simon Fraser and other explorers. The final two brief remarks about First Nations in the book are separated by a span of 60 years or more than 200 pages!¹⁰⁹ This omission was unexceptional for the time since “academic history had stressed other priorities – namely the formation of a literate society based upon European patterns of political and economic activity, spheres which the native peoples were either excluded for or seem to be so.”¹¹⁰ Lamb’s review was apologetic, “Ormsby decided to make her history the story of the white man in British Columbia, that meant she could say nothing about the Indians.”¹¹¹ Not only did Ormsby write a white narrative of the province, she also wrote one that celebrated the accomplishments of developers and resource exploiters, usually indifferent or hostile to the aspirations of First Nations; “in *British Columbia: A History*” John Norris wrote “Margaret has lauded the developers of the province in the spirit of the hinterlanders: development is good because it brings comfort, leisure, education and civilization.”¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ John Norris, “Margaret Ormsby,” *BC Studies* 32 (Winter 1976/77): 23-24.

¹⁰⁸ Margaret Ormsby, *British Columbia: A History* (Vancouver: Macmillan, 1958), 545.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* On page 284 Ormsby refers to the Indian Reserve Policy of George Walkem’s government in the 1870s, and the next reference to First Nations occurs on page 492 when the Johnson-Anscomb coalition government enfranchised First Nations in the late 1940s.

¹¹⁰ Reimer, “The Making of British Columbia History” 404.

¹¹¹ Lamb, “Review,” 221.

¹¹² Norris, “Margaret Ormsby,” 17

The 1958 Centennial Committee also supported the publication of *British Columbia: a Centennial Anthology* in which the province's "writers, artists, and photographers" united "to display some of her varied abundance." As in the case of other centennial volumes, it largely ignored First Nations. Although the extracts included dated from 1786 to 1957, the only evidence of the First Nations were a few photographs of individuals and of native carvings and a five-line poem, "Indian Children."¹¹³

The 1971 Committee neither sought a more balanced written history. Even in its nod to multiculturalism, *Strangers Entertained*, First Nations seemed an afterthought, as the book, a project of the Ethnic Subcommittee, was an account of "strangers" who "have come to this province in the last century."¹¹⁴ Unlike most of the other chapters, which were authored by ethnic representatives, the book's editor, John Norris, wrote the chapter on First Nations. Despite its title "They Met the Boat: the Native Indians in British Columbia," this chapter does ascribe what contemporary historians would recognize as agency to coastal peoples at the time of the fur trade, and recognizes Nisga'a political activism, although little detail can be given in nine short pages. Norris notes the socio-economic gap that occurred as a result of colonization, and like many letter-writers discussed previously in this chapter, expresses a hope that renewed interest in Native arts and culture will result in mended relationships: "worth studying, the Indians become worth understanding; worth understanding, the become worth having as fellow citizens." It is unfortunate that Norris did not have a Native writer prepare this section.

¹¹³ Reginald Eyre Watters, ed., *British Columbia: a Centennial Anthology* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1958), viii.

¹¹⁴ John Norris, *Strangers Entertained: A History of the Ethnic Groups of British Columbia* (Vancouver: Evergreen Press, 1971), 1.

Another volume, *It Happened in B.C. – A Pictorial Review 1871-1971* became a lightning rod for controversy. In March 1971, Donna Tyndall of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs wrote to the Centennial Committee objecting to the book’s contention that Simon Fraser “discovered” the Province.

For many years, Indians have worked and hoped for changes in the history books. Special concern is felt about the school texts from which Indian children have to learn their lessons. Indian people wonder why their contributions to history have always been ignored. How would Alexander McKenzie or Simon Fraser have fared without the ready hospitality, the kindness and the guidance of Indian people? From these men’s own diaries, it is clear that without the aid of our ancestors, their journey’s would have probably come to abrupt endings long before any ocean was reached.

The letter further criticized the Committee for only calling on Natives to add “colour” to the celebrations. And, she complained, that despite keeping their culture alive in the years since colonization “we are still ignored except when we can help the white society in their various money-making schemes – including the one called Centennial Celebration 1971.” She ended with a challenge “How indeed, are you going to give us something to come out and sing and dance about?”¹¹⁵

The UBCIC coordinated the sending of this letter with a media blitz to air its objections, where it pulled no punches. Tyndall told the *Vancouver Sun* “we are being used as window dressing. It’s okay if we hang around on the surface – but underneath we’re getting hardly any encouragement” from the Committee which has turned “a blind

¹¹⁵ BCA, CCC Committee, GR-1449, Box 8, file: Native Indians Participation, Donna Tyndall, Publications Director of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs to L.J. Wallace, 15 March 1971.

official eye to Indian heritage.”¹¹⁶ Len Maracle, official spokesperson for the Union, told the other Vancouver daily newspaper that the omission of First Nations from the book could only be taken as “discriminatory.”¹¹⁷ The following week, the annual conference of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs at Prince George passed a motion objecting to the province’s official centenary book which “exclude[d] any mention of Indian history.” No doubt to the chagrin of Wallace and the other organizers, representatives at the conference took things further. The representative from the Okanagan-Kootenay district told the press that he could not see how any aboriginal person could celebrate the Centenary “especially with the Social Credit government trying to suppress us.”¹¹⁸ And reminiscent of 1958, some Native leaders refused to participate in the official celebrations and planned to call the Stasamis Indian Festival at Victoria’s Macaulay Point “Indian Day not centennial celebrations.”¹¹⁹ Chief Philip Paul of the Tsartlip people told the *Victoria Times* that they had considered canceling the festival if it was to have the connotation of being a centennial event, but decided against it because “the mere fact that Indian people have been able to survive 100 years of suppression is worth celebrating.”¹²⁰

While the BC media reported extensively on these matters,¹²¹ L.J. Wallace was left scrambling since the UBCIC did not wait for a response before calling the press. Indeed, he had not even received the original letter before the first stories appeared in two provincial dailies. As a result the Committee initially did not respond. On March 23, Wallace drafted a terse response to Tyndall, listing in point form the various projects

¹¹⁶ *Vancouver Sun*, 20 March 1971.

¹¹⁷ *Vancouver Province*, 20 March 1971.

¹¹⁸ *Vancouver Sun*, 24 March 1971.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid* and *Victoria Times* 26 May 1971.

¹²⁰ *Victoria Times*, 14 May 1971.

¹²¹ Local papers throughout the province reported on these matters as well.

“that this Committee has attempted to provide for the Indian Bands of this Province.”

His letter did not even address the issue of the book; its biting closing sentence indicates the level of frustration Wallace must have felt, as it was the Committee’s aim from the beginning to ensure wide Native participation – albeit on its own terms. He wrote “My Committee is only able to invite participation on the part of any of the people of British Columbia and if you are invited to sing and dance and do not accept, there is not much that can be done in any Society.”¹²² A week later, perhaps after consulting others and letting cooler heads prevail, Wallace rewrote his response to Tyndall. This time it was more courteous and addressed the criticism of *It Happened in BC* by pointing out that “there was no attempt to write a definitive history of the Province and its people, both native and adopted...To go back to the earliest formative days is not the concept of the book.”¹²³ Once the Committee and Wallace decided where they should stand on this controversy, Wallace went to the media reiterating that the book was a pictorial history of the last 100 years and was “not intended to cover the entire history of BC,”¹²⁴ and that the Native people of BC had been given many opportunities to participate in the celebrations through the Indian Participation Subcommittee and in various capacities.¹²⁵ There is no indication whether the UBCIC further corresponded on this matter, but one North Coast newspaper did not want Wallace to have the last word. It argued that Wallace’s explanation is “full of holes” since if the book’s purpose was to only cover the past one hundred years “why start 50-odd years before with a journey by Fraser?” Representing a

¹²² BCA, BCC ’71 Committee, GR-1450, Box 8, file: Native Indians Participation, Draft, L.J. Wallace to Donna Tyndall, 23 March 1971.

¹²³ Ibid., L.J. Wallace to Donna Tyndall, 28 March 1971.

¹²⁴ *Vancouver Province*, 20 March 1971.

¹²⁵ *Vancouver Sun*, 23 March 1971 and *Crowsnest Clarion*, 10 June 1971.

region with a large population of First Nations, this writer asserted that the native peoples had been here longer than whites and that the book was an insult to them.¹²⁶

Despite the activism and advances BC's First Nations had made in the thirteen years between the first centenary and the last, the Centennial Committee only made superficial amends to Native representation and participation in the centennials. Throughout this period its overriding objectives were to secure First Nations participation within parameters it determined, and to encourage the replication of totem poles as a symbol of BC. However, the Committee was unwilling to grant a political voice to First Nations in order to secure their participation, and it was not dissuaded from appropriating totem poles by Native skepticism or criticism. Further, it denied First Nations an active role in the province's history, thereby maintaining government hegemony. Only with pressure from non-Native British Columbians who wanted to mend relations with First Nations and to recognize them in an increasingly pluralistic society, did the Committee allow for accommodation by creating an Indian Participation Subcommittee, encouraging a fuller expression of arts, and accepting Chief Dan George's public lament over lost culture and the shameful contemporary socio-economic situation of First Nations. Nevertheless, the Committee resolutely denied First Nations a special status in the celebrations. In 1971, Nanaimo's committee chairman appealed to the Central Committee for funds on behalf of the Nanaimo Indian Band to stage a traditional potlatch with "Indian dancing, songs and music." The reply referred to a familiar policy, that the potlatch "must be regarded as part of the local celebration the same way any other ethnic

¹²⁶ *Omineca Herald* (Terrace), 25 March 1971.

group who wishes to celebrate,” therefore the band must create its own community centennial committee to apply for funds.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ BCA, BCC '71 Committee, GR-1450, Box 37, file: Nanaimo, city of, L.J. Wallace to Les Mottishaw, 31 March 1971.

**Chapter Six:
'Common Citizen's Cuckolded': The end of the Centennial Era**

BC CENTENNIAL IS:

Much ado about nothing.

If you don't think so, ask:

The unemployed and welfare recipients.
 Those on low incomes and substandard wages.
 The parents of the retarded and the brilliant.
 Old soldiers on Veteran's allowances.
 The young who have no transportation.
 All those who cannot afford to run an automobile.
 Those who cannot afford to get decent housing.
 The hungry who cannot afford nutritious food while supermarkets and farmers destroy food.
 Those who sweat in labour while slob rake in the sheaves.
 The sick and infirm.
 The hopeless who turn to alcohol and drugs.
 The driver on the crowded streets.
 The victims of car accidents.
 The poor who wish to find work.
 The wise who which to find meaningful activity.
 The school teachers who wish to teach the art of living and loving.
 Those who seek higher knowledge but find the places of learning overcrowded with no room for them.
 The consumer who pays the price of "free" enterprise.
 The ecologist who cares.
 The dispossessed and the unwanted.
 The student who is stuck with an outmoded curriculum.
 Our fish in our polluted waters.
 Those who know that we are only sharecroppers in our own land.
 Those awaiting the birth of DEMOCRACY.
 And so on-the list is endless.

Yes this centennial marks 100 years – but consider. The only ones who will be cheering will be the carpetbaggers – or, should I say carpet (buggerers): and of course, the INANE...

As you proudly wave your centennial flag – I, and others shall weep.
Those who have a shred of humanitarianism, that is.¹

The Centennial Committee received this anonymous poem during the 1971 celebration of the 100th anniversary of British Columbia joining confederation. Mocking the centenary's symbol of three interlocking C's, the writer proclaimed the letter was on behalf of "Common Citizen's Cuckolded." This letter contains many of the themes this chapter will address - notably criticism and cynicism at the frivolity of centennial as a symbol of government excess.

British Columbia had made significant material gains and achieved a new confidence during the tenure of the W.A.C. Bennett government with its centennial celebrations. However, by 1971 BC's centenary audience had undergone radical ideological and demographic shifts. Elaborate state-sponsored celebrations were no longer novel, nor were British Columbians eager for this type of promotion in the face of rising unemployment and a new awareness of environmental problems. British Columbians were far more cynical towards this centenary, some perceiving it as a commercial opportunity (from which some could benefit) rather than a heartfelt commemoration. Further cynicism came from the baby boom generation and a new environmental and social consciousness. While many people still enjoyed the events surrounding the '71 centenary, it did attract widespread and vocal criticism. This chapter will demonstrate that the later two centennials were not immune from wider socio-political forces; youth activism, the rise of the new left and environmentalism all ran parallel to, and affected them. The 1966-67 and 1971 Centennial Committees, like their

¹ British Columbia Archives (hereafter BCA), British Columbia Centennial '71 Committee (hereafter BCC '71 Committee), GR-1450, Box 10, file: Miscellaneous Correspondence, 'A. Dan D'Lyon' to BC Centennial Committee, undated 1971.

master –the provincial government – superficially tried to adjust to these societal changes, but ultimately were unable to do so. Dissatisfaction with and disengagement from the celebration can be read as a bellwether for the Socred’s electoral defeat in the following year. The post-war consensus – the all-out drive to exploit BC’s resources – was breaking down in the face of new voices and new attitudes.

The “sixties” was a watershed era in breaking social conventions and demanding individual rights; yet, its catchy name commonly summons up images of outlandish dress and unconventional behaviour. In fact the sixties does not necessarily refer to a decade; in his study of European and North American student and worker activism, Gerd-Rainer Horn sees the spirit of the sixties originating out of self-created styles in the later 1950s and early 1960s such as American leather-wearing delinquent gangs, Beatniks, British Teddy Boys, and German Halbstarcken. The anti-authoritarian and anti-hierarchical attitudes in these movements, he argues, “pre-disposed the members of this generation to take up political causes with greater ease.”² Horn traces student activist reactions to arbitrary administration decisions and industrial workers’ strikes in Europe (even in Franco’s Spain) to 1976 to conclude that both eventually transcended their narrow concerns. Along with the guidance of the intellectual new left, he explains that “a new generation of social movement activists [broke] from the habits and traditions of the old left and [formed] a new identity and political orientation” quite apart from party politics.³ The new left politicized everyday life and was more likely to engage in direct action and civil disobedience.

² Gerd-Rainer Horn, *The Spirit of '68: Rebellion in Western Europe and North America, 1956-1976* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 33.

³ *Ibid.*, 144.

In North America, the same currents also originated from student activism in the universities. This new activist generation found many targets in the status quo. Besides confronting the Vietnam War and racial and sexual discrimination, some young North Americans went further, challenging “the system” for “offering people less meaningful lives, binding men and women to prescribed and unfulfilling roles and limiting human potential.”⁴ In such a time of affluence and abundance this generation pitied inequity and injustice, but had faith that through everyday living and direct action they could change the world.⁵ While the “hippy” label suited some of these activists with their alternative lifestyles, it was also a label used to dismiss them. In 1967, radical and controversial Vancouver alderman Harry Rankin tried to define “hippy” in the pages of the new alternative magazine, the *Georgia Straight*:

“‘Hippies’ are rebels, even if rather unconventional ones. They’re rebelling against the widespread violence and wars of our society. They’re disillusioned with false middle class values and standards with status seekers, with people living beyond their means, with the vulgar materialism and the bitter competitiveness so prevalent today. They’re suspicious that automation will make man into a work horse, a cog in an immense machine. ‘Hippies’ want a more rational world with emphasis on the freedom of each individual to develop his own personality.”⁶

Tina Loo reminds us that in BC not everyone in this generation was a hippy; many lived conventional middle-class lifestyles while occasionally engaging in activism

⁴ Alexander Bloom, “Introduction” in *Long Time Gone: Sixties America Then and Now* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 6.

⁵ Frank Zelco, “Making Greenpeace: The Development of Direct Action Environmentalism in British Columbia,” *BC Studies* 142/143 (Summer/Autumn 2004), 213 and Tina Loo, “Flower Children in Lotusland,” *The Beaver* (February/March 1998), 36-37.

⁶ *Georgia Straight*, 8 September 1967.

or imbibing in alternative living, such as recreational drug use. And, although not exclusively made up of students or young people, the sixties spirit tended to be articulated by youth as a result of the baby boom – the large demographic born in the immediate post-war years. Doug Owram observes that “the baby boom became conscious of itself as a generational force and began to think of itself as special, not for the economic affluence it had been given, but for the moral and personal attributes it possessed.”⁷ Because BC’s baby boom generation was large and outspoken, the BC government and its Centennial Committee did not ignore them. Although the post-war baby boom was not yet over, by 1956 the proportion of youth aged 10 to 24 equaled 20% of British Columbia’s population. By 1971 this proportion had risen to almost 28%.⁸

As the 1971 celebration was the third in thirteen years, the centennial machinery easily clicked back into place - there was only one wrinkle. During 1969 the province requested a grant from the federal government in honour of the occasion.⁹ At the opening of the Roberts Bank super port in 1970, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau announced that the federal government would contribute ten million dollars to allow the building of major projects “designed to reflect the greatness of Canada” and to contribute towards local centennial projects.¹⁰ This ten million windfall undoubtedly motivated British Columbians to answer the BC Centennial Committee’s call for centennial suggestions. Almost immediately, a flood of letters reached government and Committee offices. At

⁷ Doug Owram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 136.

⁸ Statistics Canada, *Census of Canada, General Characteristics*, 1971.

⁹ BCA, BCC ’71 Committee, GR-1450, Box 9, file: Federal Aid ’71, W.A.C. Bennett to P.E. Trudeau, 24 November 1969; and BCA, Provincial Secretary, G91-030, Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting, 26 November 1969.

¹⁰ *Vancouver Province* and *Vancouver Sun*, 16 June 1970.

the conclusion of this centenary, the Committee noted that while it acted on some suggestions, “still there are seven file folders full of ‘Projects Rejected.’”¹¹ The Committee’s final report noted that many suggestions emanated from individuals and private groups seeking to have their cultural and artistic pursuits supported and published, while others sought to distribute the funds more widely. For instance, Vancouver’s city council asked that the grant to municipalities be on a per capita basis, meaning that Vancouver would receive almost three million dollars.¹²

However, the province had its own agenda, surely with the coming election in mind. Its interests revolved around “services for the people,” as Bennett and the province were now wary of public reaction to more projects of mere bricks and mortar.¹³ After Dr. Scott Wallace, the Social Credit MLA for Oak Bay, suggested that spending the grant on medical research into coronary diseases would demonstrate Social Credit’s sincerity to minister to people’s real needs,¹⁴ Premier Bennett asked the Prime Minister that seven million of the grant go towards health services and research on which “public opinion is practically unanimous.”¹⁵ Bennett exaggerated that unanimity. One letter-writer asked the premier “if you sincerely believe the public [has] had an opportunity to consider and to recommend to you and to Prime Minister Trudeau as to how the public wished this

¹¹ British Columbia Centennial ’71 Committee, *The Celebration of the Century 1871-1971: The Report of the British Columbia Centennial ’71 Committee* (Victoria BC, 1973), 5.

¹² BCA, BCC ’71 Committee, GR-1450, Box 9, file: Federal Aid ’71, Ronald Thompson, City Clerk to W.A.C. Bennett, 18 June 1970.

¹³ *Victoria Colonist*, 22 November 1970; *Vancouver Province*, 7 July 1970; and BCA, BCC ’71 Committee, GR-1450, Box 9, file: Federal Aid ’71, L.J. Wallace to Gerard Pelletier, Secretary of State, 3 July 1970.

¹⁴ *Victoria Colonist*, 21 June 1970.

¹⁵ BCA, BCC ’71 Committee, GR-1450, Box 9, file: Federal Aid ’71, W.A.C. Bennett to P.E. Trudeau, 3 July 1970. Bennett requested three million of it to fund local and community celebrations.

grant spent[?]" He questioned the province's motives in wanting health services "when we already have a Provincial Health department, hospital and medical and health facilities and programs and presumably these functions have been given their priorities in your overall Provincial programs."¹⁶ The federal government likely had the same thoughts about a project that the province would administer without giving the federal government credit.¹⁷ When its suggestion was rejected, the province "regroup[ed] its forces" and Resource Minister Ray Williston asked that the bulk of the grant go towards an environmental control center. Iain Street, the *Victoria Colonist* reporter covering this story, echoed Ottawa's sentiment about health services and medical research, noting that any such center should be part of a *provincial* anti-pollution campaign.¹⁸ Such public debate over the ten million dollar grant prompted the *Vancouver Sun*'s publication of a Len Norris cartoon lampooning the heated feelings that the issue arose on both sides. In the cartoon, two male neighbours have an all-out fistfight, while their wives look on, one saying to another "I think it started over how to spend their \$10 million that Mr. Trudeau gave to Mr. Bennett."¹⁹ Eventually the province accepted the fact that it was the federal government's prerogative to spend the funds as it saw fit.²⁰ The provincial and federal governments agreed that three million would be spent on administering the celebration and providing per capita grants to local communities. While partaking in the celebrations in BC on the first of July, Trudeau announced how the remaining funds would be spent.

¹⁶ BCA, BCC '71 Committee, GR-1450, box 9, file: Federal Aid '71, G. P. Stevens to W.A.C. Bennett, 9 July 1971.

¹⁷ *Victoria Times*, 8 July 1970.

¹⁸ *Victoria Colonist*, 22 November 1970.

¹⁹ *Vancouver Sun*, 8 July 1970

²⁰ BCA, BCC '71 Committee, GR-1450, Box 9, file: Federal Aid '71, L.J. Wallace to A. Brown, 27 March 1971.

Gifts for “the people of Canada” would come in the form of a \$2.5 million museum dedicated to the display of Native art and artifacts at the University of British Columbia and a \$4.5 million fund to develop conservation areas in the province.²¹ The province favoured neither project. Several months before the official announcement, L.J. Wallace said he was “appalled” at the suggestion of the museum: “such a dry as dust, useless, sterile expenditure of a large sum of money must give our Indians cold comfort and depress further their faint hope that government is really aware of their plight and sympathetic to their betterment.”²² As to the conservation fund, Resource Minister Williston said, “As you know...when somebody gives you something as a gift, you can’t say very much about it.” Williston had not been consulted about the project, and was concerned it would duplicate a program the province was already planning.²³

However, these projects *did* live up to public expectations. Throughout the discussion about spending the ten million dollar grant, prominent First Nations organizations including the BC Indian Homemaker’s Association, the North American Indian Brotherhood and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs lobbied for the construction of a museum dedicated to Native arts and culture.²⁴ Similarly, individuals and burgeoning environmental groups implored the government to stop pollution and clean up the environment. One interior resident suggested “many of us in BC feel that instead of spending this money on a variety of more or less smaller local ‘bronze plaque’ type of

²¹ *Kamloops Daily Sentinel*, 2 July 1971. The Second Century Fund for conservation is now the Nature Trust of British Columbia.

²² *Victoria Colonist*, 23 January 1971.

²³ *Victoria Times*, 6 July 1971.

²⁴ BCA, BCC ’71 Committee, GR-1450, Box 9, file: Federal Aid ’71, Mrs. Ben Paul, director, BC Indian Homemaker’s Association, to W.A.C. Bennett, 13 August 1970 and Chief Philip Paul, Executive member, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, to W.A.C. Bennett, 22 October 1970.

centennial projects, our Provincial Government may decide to take the initiative in stopping or even reversing pollution in our province.”²⁵

What does this episode and the discussion surrounding the federal grant illustrate about this centennial? Certainly it brought out competing interests. Many letter writers wanted the federal funds directed to projects related to their personal or commercial interests which, as in the case of the province itself, were self-serving. The province’s requests suggest that it viewed the cash as a means of furthering provincial programs, rather than leaving a legacy for the province. This display of self-interest bred a cynicism about the aims of the centennial. This centenary seemed much more commercial than its earlier counterparts. Even in the way of centennial merchandise the Committee “went much more fully into this field than...previous[ly].”²⁶ This commercialization clashed with segments of the public that saw need and injustice in society, prompting satirical letters such as the one that opens this chapter. Celebration for the sake of celebrating had lost its luster, especially to youth and the new left.

The Centennial Committee had tried to draw in youth in the previous centennials through the “big party” atmosphere and school programs,²⁷ but particularly sought to

²⁵ BCA, BCC ’71 Committee, GR-1450, Box 9, file: Federal Aid ’71, Joe Reuter to L.J. Wallace, 25 January 1971.

²⁶ *Celebration of the Century, 1871-1971*, 3

²⁷ In 1958, the provincial government wanted youth to participate in the centenary in a meaningful way. It decided, in conjunction with the Department of Education, to launch a Youth sculpture project. BC’s schoolchildren would contribute ten cents each towards a public art piece to be installed on the legislature lawns, and after the project was complete, each child would receive a postcard of the sculpture in gratitude. The design would come from a competition of BC artists. But the project was never completed. The competition jury, also made up of artists, chose three abstract designs as finalists, but “most people were offended by the proposed designs. In their view, the designs were unintelligible and unattractive.” Further, many citizens were offended that such art pieces, one called a “nightmare blob,” were to be paid for by children. An alternative

orient 1971 towards youth, recognizing the size and power of this demographic. At the 1969 inaugural meeting of the '71 Centennial Committee, L.J. Wallace urged the other members to come up with fresh concepts. The members quickly and unanimously decided to put the “accent on youth and the future.” But what future would be highlighted? Before consulting any youth, or forming a youth subcommittee to give input (lest they suggest a back-to-the-land theme, or some such hippy vision) the Committee chose a de facto theme that very meeting. Noting that Century Sam was still a very popular figure in “lesser populated areas,” the Committee recognized that the current generation might find him out of date. Unwilling to abandon the familiar mascot totally, the Committee gave Sam a modern makeover by trading in his 1950s western attire and donkey for “a rocket or some other modern mode.”²⁸ One illustration had Sam and Sue on a rocket, and another featured their new space-age look as illustrated in figure 6.²⁹ At its third meeting the Committee continued planning with the space theme in mind, likely with the blessing of the premier.³⁰ It wanted to invite both US Astronauts and Russian Cosmonauts, along with their equipment, to some high profile event during the

suggestion, to support children’s hospitals, came via the South Saanich Women’s Institute. The BC Centennial Committee jumped on this more diplomatic project, and used the \$18,885 raised to buy library books and playground equipment for these facilities. Patrick Dunae, “Nightmare blob? ‘50s Art & Outrage,” *Victoria Times-Colonist*, 15 July 2003.

²⁸ BCA, Provincial Secretary, G91-030, Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting, 6 May 1969.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 20 June 1969.

³⁰ During 1966, W.A.C. Bennett personally wrote the National Aeronautical and Space Administration (NASA) in support of the BC Junior Chamber of Commerce’s request to display a Gemini capsule for the Chamber’s Centennial Exhibition. Simon Fraser University Archives (hereafter SFU), W.A.C. Bennett fonds, F 55-34-0-6, 16 February 1966.

centenary year.³¹ In the planning guide given to local committees, the Committee exhorted British Columbians to also “have a sense of vision into the future” in the centenary by “gear[ing] your celebrations more to the future in a sort of space-age fashion as well as reflecting the past.”³²



Figure 6: Space-Age Century Sam and Centennial Sue. British Columbia Centennial '71 Committee, *Centennial '71: A Guide* (Victoria BC, 1969), 30. Copyright © Province of British Columbia. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission of the Province of British Columbia.

After these foundational steps, the Committee turned over youth events to the new Youth Activities Subcommittee – a first in BC’s centennial organization. The Committee obviously acknowledged the size of this demographic, but also appeared to recognize youth as a political generation. If the Committee could harness their strength to support

³¹ BCA, British Columbia Centennial '71 Committee, GR-1450, Box 45, file: BC Centennial '71, Board of Directors, Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting, 18 July 1969. There is no further evidence that the Committee ever did so.

³² British Columbia Centennial '71 Committee, *Centennial '71: A Guide* (1969), 8.

the centenary and government messages, it would bring a new energy to the aging regime. Since the Subcommittee was so new, and most of the representatives (but not the chairman – A.H. Emmott, a Burnaby councillor) were young adults, L.J. Wallace sent out a liaison director, S.E. Hughes, to guide and monitor the inaugural meeting. Perhaps sensing that the youth assembled were hesitant to act as spokespersons for their generation, he pointed out to the members that their Subcommittee represented a “good cross-section of youth” although it would be impossible to have youth representatives from the entire province. He advised them to devise their own “terms of reference” and to undertake projects of “significant stature.” Still, the Subcommittee decided to solicit suggestions from secondary school students to determine youth’s needs and projects acceptable to all areas of the province.³³ Cognizant of the fact that youth might not be attracted to the centennial, the Committee publicly admitted that “there is nothing more establishment than a government committee” but still called on ideas from youth for “something entirely new, in a category all its own.”³⁴ Months passed and the Subcommittee received few suggestions from the province’s high schools, indicating the ambivalence most youth had for the centenary. One of the only projects the Subcommittee pursued was suggested by member Roy Hennessy, a Vancouver radio DJ, who “anticipated being in the company of Mr. John Lennon in several week’s time”; if he could entice Lennon and Yoko Ono to come to British Columbia their presence “could possibly be tied in with a project on Pollution” and “would be highly favoured by young

³³ BCA, Provincial Secretary, G91-030, Minutes of the Youth Activities Subcommittee, 3 December 1969.

³⁴ *Trail Daily Times*, 15 January 1970.

people.”³⁵ Hennessy made the inquiry, but Lennon did not accept the invitation. After some deliberation, the Subcommittee decided that establishing youth hostels would be a project of interest and need for youth.³⁶ Unfortunately, the Centennial Committee would not fund projects of a capital nature unless they emanated from local centennial committees. Perhaps feeling hamstrung by the older chairman, and testing the Committee’s commitment to youth, one young member proposed ridding the Subcommittee of adults: he moved “that the committee be turned over to young people with the Chairman assisted by an Advisory Committee to advise the young people.”³⁷ The Subcommittee discussed the notice of motion at its next meeting. Although Chairman Emmott underlined the “obvious controversy that would ensue from the parent committee and particularly Mr. Wallace” if the Subcommittee disbanded in favour of an all youth (ages 14-22) group, “the consensus [among the representatives] was that only youth...could make a final decision for a centennial activity.” When the motion passed, Emmott agreed to contact Wallace and the Centennial Committee Board regarding a budget for the newly reconstituted youth committee before tendering his resignation.³⁸

At the subsequent meeting, the ad-hoc subcommittee reported progress in organizing the province’s youth, but Wallace took up much of the meeting reviewing “how the various sub-committees had been set up,” that no subcommittee had a budget, and that the subcommittee was merely “an ‘idea’ committee...as to ways in which youth

³⁵ BCA, Provincial Secretary, G91-030, Minutes of the Youth Activities Subcommittee, 4 February 1970.

³⁶ Ibid., 25 February 1970.

³⁷ Ibid., 8 April 1970.

³⁸ BCA, Provincial Secretary, G91-030, Minutes of the Youth Activities Subcommittee, 22 April 1970.

could participate in the Centennial celebration.”³⁹ Despite this, the subcommittee’s young members reiterated they were ready for the responsibility of acting more independently and would carry forth their motion. Of course, their decision had no consequence without the approval of the Centennial Committee Board which refused “to reconstitute this Sub-Committee at this late date.” Reasoning that youth were already well-served on the Athletics and Sports Activities, Community Activities and Educational Activities subcommittees, the Board of Directors dissolved the Youth Activities Subcommittee.⁴⁰ In hindsight, the Centennial Committee should have anticipated such a controversy. In fact, at a planning session for youth in the 1966/67 centenary, one teenaged presenter voiced her opinion that “young people themselves should be given an opportunity to do their own selecting and planning of youth projects and that the role of adult supervisors should be that of assisting where requested.”⁴¹ Surely, in the rebellious spirit of the “sixties,” youth would want sole representation in a committee dedicated to serving their interests. Since youth did not want to play along, the Committee omitted any reference to the Subcommittee in the final report and erased it from the organizational chart.⁴²

There certainly was substance to the Centennial Committee’s claim that other subcommittees and local committees represented youth, particularly since it announced youth as a priority at the outset of planning. For instance, at the first meeting of the

³⁹ Ibid., 10 June 1970.

⁴⁰ BCA, BCC ’71 Committee, GR-1450, Box 45, file: BC Centennial ’71, Minutes, Board of Directors, Minutes of the Board of Directors of meeting, 9 July 1970.

⁴¹ City of Vancouver Archives (hereafter CVA), Series 27, City Council and Office of the City Clerk, 89-D-6, file 4, Report of the Youth and Educational Section – Centennial ‘Blitz’ Seminar, 7 October 1965.

⁴² *The Celebration of the Century 1871-1971*.

Religious Activities Subcommittee the chairman and Committee liaison made clear “the need for emphasis on youth within the broader frame of reference.” With this in mind, the first suggestion emanating from this Subcommittee was a religious folk festival “for youth and all ages.”⁴³ Although this project did not proceed, the Subcommittee did organize two touring projects geared towards youth: a Christian drama troupe which played at colleges and universities, and “Celebration,” a rock gospel band. Both included “stimulating young performers” who found an “enthusiastic reception.”⁴⁴

Reacting to the strong environmental and anti-development ethic springing up among youth, as will be discussed below, the Industrial Development Subcommittee also tried to gear its projects towards drawing in youth. Initially, it wanted to sponsor an essay contest for BC’s youth on the subject of “British Columbia’s Industrial Future,” but the Educational Activities Sub-Committee strongly dissuaded it from pursuing the project as being hopelessly “out of date.”⁴⁵ Further, when the Industrial Development Subcommittee chairman, J.V. Christensen, approached a group of high school students about the contest, he reported “they turned me down cold on the idea of an essay about the importance of industry. They wanted to know if I would accept the idea of writing about not having industry in BC or one on how industry pollutes our province. I didn’t find that acceptable for the idea we had in mind.” This attitude hardened the Subcommittee’s resolve to educate youth, whose teachers, in its opinion, were “often

⁴³ BCA, Provincial Secretary, G91-030 Minutes of the Religious Activities Subcommittee, 14 November 1969.

⁴⁴ *The Celebration of the Century 1871-1971*, 43.

⁴⁵ BCA, Provincial Secretary, G91-030, Minutes of the Educational Activities Subcommittee meeting, 5 January 1970.

anti-industry,” about the benefits of it.⁴⁶ It thought that tours of manufacturing plants would be a dynamic and direct way to teach youth since “the more spectacular the industry, the more attractive to young people.”⁴⁷ Safety concerns made this plan unfeasible. In its stead, the Subcommittee created an audio-visual presentation on the importance and role of industry to BC.⁴⁸ At its completion, Christensen noted that youth “are questioning many of the concepts of our economic ways and have a right to do so.” Upon viewing the presentation, however, “the students, who are very sharp, often change or soften their views.”⁴⁹ This was wishful thinking. These projects would have been welcomed, and fit in, in the development-friendly 1958 centennial. But in 1971, they seemed a desperate attempt to make the government’s agenda relevant to youth. It is doubtful that the presentation did much to quell rising environmentalism and anti-industry ethos articulated by youth.

Some community centennial committees had more success in attracting youth to participate in the celebrations, if Nanaimo is any measure. Nanaimo was always enthusiastic about making the wider centennial a success, and 1971 was no different. With the centenary’s new emphasis on youth, Nanaimo’s chairman Les Mottishaw and a new youth chairman, Jack Fyfe, called an exploratory meeting with fifty local youth representatives.⁵⁰ The assembled youngsters and children wanted parades and sporting events and the local committee complied. Once planning was complete to include a large youth contingent in the New Year’s parade, a soccer championship, a boy scout

⁴⁶ *Vancouver Province*, 10 April 1971.

⁴⁷ BCA, Provincial Secretary, G91-030, Minutes of the Industrial Progress and Participation Subcommittee, 10 December 1969.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 3 June 1970.

⁴⁹ *Vancouver Province*, 10 April 1971.

⁵⁰ *Nanaimo Daily Free Press*, 7 October 1970.

jamboree, and a figure skating carnival, among other events, Mottishaw boasted that “it seems like every weekend in 1971 has a youth event.”⁵¹ In other communities, youth had to demand to be recognized. An organized group of Prince George youth submitted a brief to city council calling on its centennial committee to build a youth center as Prince George’s centennial project. Noting that half the Prince George population was under twenty-two years of age, the youth complained the community was “grossly inadequate in its provision of facilities for cultural, social and artistic development of youth.”⁵²

In other ways, youth co-opted the occasion for their own purposes. A White Rock high school hosted a “Centennial Student’s Conference,” although other than taking place during centennial year, it had nothing to do with the centenary. Instead, 150 students from across the province met with a “unanimity in purpose” to reform the educational system. The conference worked on a “Student Bill of Rights” in which they demanded such changes as “non-compulsory attendance, non-grading (pass or fail), continuous progress (student learning at his own speed), [and] relevant curriculum (politics, drugs, sex education, legal rights, racial problems, religion, human relations).”⁵³

This centenary was surely out of step with the concerns of youth. Figure 7, a cartoon depicting a suited middle-aged man requesting the BC Centennial song at a hippy coffeehouse concert, illustrates the absurdity of “establishment” figures trying to attract youth with such old-fashioned and conventional fare. If they did participate, British Columbia’s young adults used the centennial to voice their concerns about the treatment of youth, as youth. In the Subcommittee they challenged the province to allow them

⁵¹ *Nanaimo Daily Free Press*, 14 November 1970.

⁵² *Prince George North Star*, 2 May 1970.

⁵³ *Georgia Straight*, 7-11 May 1971.

leeway to develop projects for their contemporaries. They also rejected projects such as the Industrial Progress Subcommittee's essay contest that did not appeal to them. Finally, they used the centennial as an opportunity to express the needs and desires of youth. To be sure, young people, particularly children, did participate in many aspects of this centenary, but publicly youth was not an ally for this celebration, and joined others who were critical of staging a large, expensive celebration at what they saw to be a time of grave social challenges.



Figure 7: Centennial Generation Clash. Norris, Len. "How about doing the BC centennial song?" March 26, 1966 Sun <<http://www.lib.sfu.ca/cgi-bin/edocs/Caroons?CartoonID=829>> Accessed from the SFU Library Editorial Collection on [06/12/07]

By the 1970s, after two decades of substantial growth in resource sectors, many British Columbians were questioning the environmental and ecological effects related to the “good life.” Outside forces, such as the appearance of Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* in 1962, high-profile oil spills in Cornwall, England and California, and US nuclear testing in the Aleutian Islands informed Canadians about the environmental costs of development.⁵⁴ But their awareness of pollution and environmental damage also came from the dissonance of the province promoting BC as “beautiful” (and later supernatural) while also irrevocably altering the landscape in the quest for hydroelectricity, minerals and profits from logging. The province’s premier counter-culture newspaper, the *Georgia Straight*, carried numerous articles in 1970 and 1971 devoted to conservation and the environment, and found its nemesis in the Social Credit government. One author stated, “At a time when environmental awareness is increasing rapidly elsewhere, the attitudes of the Social Credit government towards environmental issues remains intransigent. They have opted for the ‘good life,’ and have sold their souls to the devil in the name of the false god of progress.”⁵⁵ Such criticism was not new. In the mid-1960s author Roderick Haig-Brown used the Convention of Canadian Authors to voice his disgust at the province’s choice of short-term material gain over the long-term conservation of wild areas, particularly provincial parks. Through his twenty-eight books and innumerable magazine articles, Haig-Brown “articulated a ‘counter-narrative’ to the

⁵⁴ Jennifer Read, “‘Let us Heed the Voice of Youth:’ Laundry Detergents, Phosphates and the Emergence of the Environmental Movement in Ontario,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* (1996): 227-250, Frank Zelco, “Making Greenpeace: The Development of Direct Action in British Columbia,” *BC Studies* 143 (2004): 197-239.

⁵⁵ *Georgia Straight*, 6-13 May 1970.

story of development and modernization in post-war BC.”⁵⁶ But he was not alone.

Although provincial scholarship on the environment and the environmental movement is underdeveloped,⁵⁷ discourse around the 1971 celebration shows a clear environmental ethic had emerged among youth and ordinary British Columbians, even outside of the established environmental activist groups like SPEC, Greenpeace and the Sierra Club,⁵⁸ and outside of urban Vancouver.⁵⁹

Letters sent to the premier and to the Centennial Committee illustrate that concerns for the environment far outweighed deference towards the government’s development agenda. In fact, some letters clearly chastised that agenda. In 1969, for instance, a group of Vancouver children, aged ten to twelve, who were concerned with pollution wrote to Premier Bennett asking why he was not. The children even hinted at collusion, asking, “we wonder if the big companies you are letting ruin our lands are your friends or if you have to do what they say. Please Mr. Bennett make these people treat BC as the glorious place it is.”⁶⁰ This letter arrived before the 1971 Committee called for the public to make suggestions for the centennial. Once they made the call, they received a deluge of letters echoing such sentiments from a wide range of British Columbians.

Environmental themes appeared in centennial songs and poems. A devout couple from Victoria submitted the words and music to a song that was to be performed at their

⁵⁶ Arn Keeling and Robert McDonald, “The Profligate Province: Roderick Haig-Brown and the Modernizing of British Columbia,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 36 (2001), 18.

⁵⁷ Graeme Wynn, “Shall we Linger Along Ambitionless? Environmental Perspectives on British Columbia,” *BC Studies* 142/143 (Summer/Autumn 2004): 5-67.

⁵⁸ See Zelco, “Making Greenpeace.”

⁵⁹ For the Vancouver environmental scene consult Rex Weyler, *Greenpeace: How a Group of Ecologists, Journalists and Visionaries changed the World*, (Vancouver: Raincoast books, 2004).

⁶⁰ Simon Fraser University Archives (hereafter SFU), W.A.C. Bennett fonds, F55-50-0-18, file: Miscellaneous items, 1969, 21 children to W.A.C. Bennett, 27 November 1969.

United Church for the centennial, including such lyrics such as “How will we treat this land of ours? Lavish pride and rev-rence [sic] and care.” They asserted that “the song reflects the true spirit of this centennial year, and acknowledges that unless we take care of our natural resources there will be none left for our children to enjoy.”⁶¹ A mother from the East Kootenays sent Wallace a poem written by her fifteen-year-old son, showing “very plainly who is most concerned for the welfare of our beautiful province.” The poem chronicled the development of British Columbia since the arrival of Simon Fraser, and the scars left by gold seekers, loggers, and rail construction, reversing the optimistic view of the past presented in 1958. It ends:

So we’ve lived here a hundred years or so,
And prospered by nature’s grace
But to show our thanks, what have we done?
Put scars upon her face.

We look ahead to destiny so bright
And a nation we’ve planned on leadin’
But beware lest we, like Adam and Eve,
Should be banished from our Garden of Eden.⁶²

Less creative correspondence came by way of suggestions for beautifying local areas, eradicating litter and repairing the damage from logging.⁶³ Provincial newspapers also reported proposals relating to the environment. Students from Oak Bay and Victoria

⁶¹ BCA, BCC ’71 Committee, GR-1450, Box 23, file: Projects, no grants required, Ian R. Wesmacott to L.J. Wallace, 17 February 1971.

⁶² BCA, BCC ’71 Committee, GR-1450, Box 23, file: Projects, no grants required, Mrs. R. James Lowe to L.J. Wallace, 10 June 1970.

⁶³ BCA, BCC ’71 Committee, GR-1450, Box 10, file: Ideas, Centennial ’71 (submissions), Ellen Rogers to L.J. Wallace, 6 June 1969 and Martha Duck to L.J. Wallace, 4 August 1969.

high schools, lobbied for an Environmental Information center as Greater Victoria's centennial project, to "coordinate existing information on the environment, interpret information and offer citizens a greater opportunity for personal involvement."⁶⁴

Environmentalists also registered their thoughts about where the \$10 million federal grant should be spent. The new Society of Pollution and Environmental Control [SPEC] felt the funds should be spent "for environmental control to stave off the effects of pollution." Specifically, SPEC wanted the Bennett government to set up a Department of Ecology and use the funds to ensure BC's environment is a healthy one. In this way Bennett would "assure himself of a glittering page in the history books."⁶⁵

Even "establishment" types favoured marking the centenary by honoring BC's environment. At a meeting regarding northern development, the representative from the Cariboo-Chilcotin gave such a blistering attack on the "mad race" of development "inviting big corporations" to extract all of the resources, that it garnered press in southern newspapers. Divorced from the frontier mentality of domination over landscape present in the earlier centennials, he asserted, "this is our centennial year and I find it difficult to accept that in the short space of 100 years and with only a little over two million people in this huge province that it is necessary to delve deeper into the northern half of our province for the purpose of extracting raw resources."⁶⁶ The British Columbia and Okanagan Historical Associations were also uninspired about this centenary. "Ho hum, another centennial," an early 1971 edition of *British Columbia Historical News*

⁶⁴ *Victoria Colonist*, 21 June 1970.

⁶⁵ *Victoria Daily Times*, 19 June 1970. It should be noted that SPEC itself formed in direct opposition to Bennett's approval of strip-mining in the Kootenays. Zelco, "Making Greenpeace," 219.

⁶⁶ *Victoria Colonist*, 16 July 1971.

opined. “With the present stress on saving our environment before it’s too late, the history of our past 100 years should provide a lesson in what not to do for the future.”⁶⁷ “One cannot help but wonder,” the Okanagan Historical Association asked “what [the next century] will bring for us if we continue to use our resources with the present reckless abandon.”⁶⁸ Likewise, an Abbotsford Air Show organizer complained about the “lack of relevancy in projects so far proposed to the real issues of today and our society.” His idea for a centennial project was “Operation Give Back to Nature,” a province-wide initiative involving communities, organizations and individual citizens that would in any small or large way possible, “give something back that has been lost or taken away by urban or industrial development.”⁶⁹ By this time, the Committee could no longer ignore such suggestions, so it passed it on to the Youth Subcommittee, albeit requesting a new title for “Operation Give Back to Nature.”⁷⁰ However, as that subcommittee was soon dissolved, this suggestion was never acted upon. In fact, despite the breadth of discussion and numerous letters regarding environmental projects, the province itself embarked on no projects devoted to the environment, despite the federal conservation fund, and the efforts of local committees like that of North Vancouver who built the Lynn Canyon Ecology Centre as its commemorative project.⁷¹

⁶⁷ “Editorial,” *British Columbia Historical News* 4:2 (February 1971), 2.

⁶⁸ Okanagan Historical Society, 35th *Annual Report of the Okanagan Historical Society* (November 1971), 9.

⁶⁹ BCA, BCC ’71 Committee, GR-1450, Box 7, file: Community Activities etc, R.C. Thornber to Frank Bernard, 13 March 1970.

⁷⁰ BCA, BCC ’71 Committee, GR-1450, Box 45, file: Board of Directors Minutes of Meetings, Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting, 16 April 1970.

⁷¹ *The Celebration of the Century 1871-1971*, 17. It is important to note that at the same time other jurisdictions in the Pacific Northwest were actively addressing the environment in public events. Organizers of Spokane’s 1974 Exposition celebrating its centennial chose “Celebrating Tomorrow’s Fresh New Environment” as the Expo’s

As an arm of the provincial government, it is not surprising that the Centennial Committee did not bother with such projects. It was, after all, an instrument meant to celebrate the successes of the Social Credit government, in particular the leaps made in opening up the North for industrial development. To devote energy to addressing pollution or cleaning up industrial sites, as letter-writers suggested, would be to repudiate the material gains and vision of this government. Furthermore, Bennett himself seemed unwilling to address the mounting opposition to his development policies. Having enjoyed nearly twenty years in office, Bennett had an unflappable confidence in his political acumen, despite evidence of public resistance. He had a deep disdain for this new counterculture, especially the environmental lobby, boldly telling the *Vancouver Sun* that they were “a whole bunch of people who don’t pay too much attention to hygiene... you know dirty feet and stuff. They are polluting the countryside even while they are carrying banners against pollution.”⁷²

Yet Bennett did not enjoy repeated re-election by ignoring potential threats. To this end, Bennett tried to appeal to this new constituency by instituting weak and “cosmetic” environmental legislation in the 1960s, like the Pollution Control Act, the Environment and Land Use Committee and legislation to create new parks and wildlife preserves.⁷³ The Throne Speech opening the 1971 legislative session was weighted towards the environment, with the promise to make BC “the best ecological environment

theme. Robert Rydell et al, *Fair America: World’s Fairs in the United States* (Washington, Smithsonian Institutional Press, 2000), 120.

⁷² *Vancouver Sun*, 22 August 1970 quoted in *Martin Robin, Pillars of Profit: The Company Province, 1934-1972*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), 292.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

in the world.”⁷⁴ No new policies, however, were forthcoming.⁷⁵ Ultimately this ruse did little to satisfy environmentalists, as Bennett’s biographer writes “at a time when pressure groups and special interests were increasing their hold on society, W.A.C. Bennett vainly tried to speak for everyone.” No policy could satisfy everyone and these environmental policies were “severely criticized for being too little too late.”⁷⁶

One such criticism came from Bob Hunter, environmentalist, spokesperson for the Vancouver counterculture, and *Vancouver Sun* columnist. In a column on the occasion of Bennett’s seventieth birthday he argued that the premier had made BC a “company” and “he doesn’t *understand* what’s going on outside the doors of his mighty hardware store.” The new environmental policies represented Bennett “jump[ing] on the bandwagon,” and Hunter argued, “in his own mind there is probably no contradiction between what he is saying and what he is doing. It makes sense for the boss of the plant to keep the machinery in good shape, to keep the drain clear and stop the pipes from getting rusty. This would seem to be his approach to pollution.”⁷⁷ Despite half-hearted legislation addressing pollution control and conservation, Bennett still fell back on the rhetoric of British Columbia’s future as an industrial frontier. For instance, he boasted that the ’71 centennial would “start another period of great development and prosperity in our province.”⁷⁸ Through boosterism and the promise of a prolonged “good life” he hoped to dampen the cries of the environmentalists. As Martin Robin noted: Bennett used “the same artifice as practiced by Richard McBride decades earlier: by flogging the boom,

⁷⁴ *Nanaimo Daily Free Press*, 21 January 1971.

⁷⁵ Robin, *Pillars of Profit*, 280.

⁷⁶ David Mitchell, *W.A.C. Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1983), 407.

⁷⁷ *Vancouver Sun*, 5 September 1970.

⁷⁸ *Vancouver Sun*, 21 January 1971.

celebrating the frontier assault, mystifying the Western pioneer spirit, and parading as champions of depressed regions led across the growth threshold by princely leaders.”⁷⁹

The promises of growth rang hollow to the province’s unemployed, underemployed and the working and middle classes that were struggling to make ends meet in the inflationary 1970s. Their voices added to those of youth, hippies and environmentalists in criticizing the Bennett government, the status quo, and particularly the centenary, which became a target at which British Columbians could aim their grievances. To be sure, each group articulated different grievances and at times worked at cross-purposes, however, together they represented a loud cacophony of opposition.

By 1971, the economy of BC was far removed from the buoyant late 1950s and 1960s with its growth of resource industries and the introduction of mega-projects. Rising inflation led to a slowdown of industrial growth at the same time that provincial public works projects ended.⁸⁰ Inflation also impacted working people’s pocketbooks: the retail price of food, as measured by the consumer price index, rose by thirty percent in just one decade, not to mention the rising costs of housing.⁸¹ People stayed away from retailers; consumer spending, the government announced, was in the “doldrums.”⁸² By early 1971 the unemployment rate in BC had reached nine percent,⁸³ a figure that belied Bennett’s optimism and twenty-year reputation as a provider of high-paying resource jobs. Bennett, who had always boasted of being at the helm of BC’s robust economy,

⁷⁹ Robin, *Pillars of Profit*, 295.

⁸⁰ George Woodcock, *British Columbia: A History of the Province* (Vancouver: Douglas & MacIntyre, 1990), 246.

⁸¹ *Vancouver Province*, 16 March 1971.

⁸² British Columbia, Department of Industrial Development, Trade and Commerce, *Monthly Bulletin of Business Activity* (January 1971), 5.

⁸³ *Georgia Straight*, 13 January 1971, 2; Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 295.

was unable to alleviate the conditions for the working class. Critics tied this failure to the centenary as figure 8 ably demonstrates. Bennett is depicted as being so detached from the concerns of the common man, that he tries to woo a down-on-his luck, unemployed man with the fountains, monuments and museums instead of presenting him a job. Further, the welfare department experienced a “turbulent” 1971, with the number of people on welfare rolls increasing by twenty-three percent over the previous year, due to “large scale unemployment” and “young adults” entering a labour market with few jobs.⁸⁴ Several authors note that the successful economy enjoyed by Social Credit during the 1950s and 1960s, spelled its defeat in 1972 since British Columbians could not reconcile themselves to the fact that the “good life” would not go on forever, nor the idea that they should curtail their rapidly rising expectations.⁸⁵ Further, the dramatic population growth and the concurrent extension of government services in health, welfare and education during Bennett’s premiership created new occupational groups which bolstered the labour movement and support for the New Democratic Party.⁸⁶

The centennial celebration seemed as good an opportunity as any to protest their plight and castigate the province. Like the environmentalists, the unemployed and labour also interpreted BC’s past 100 years of history as one of exploitation. The socialist newspaper *Pacific Tribune*, in particular, fashioned the past to make a corollary with the present. As soon as the government decided to make an occasion out of the centenary,

⁸⁴ Province of British Columbia, *Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year Ending March 31, 1970* (1971) and *Annual Report of the Department of Rehabilitation and Social Improvement for the Year Ending March 31, 1971* (1972), 23.

⁸⁵ Barman, *West Beyond the West*, 294 and Mitchell, *W.A.C. Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia*, 401.

⁸⁶ Mitchell, *W.A.C. Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia*, 422, and Donald E. Blake, *Two Political Worlds: Parties and Voting in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1985), 21.

the editor pegged it as being “a celebration at the tax-payers’ expense to boost the falling political stock of that giveaway regime.” Although there was as yet no Labour representation in the centennial organization, the editorial declared that the centenary owes labour for its existence, since “it was BC labour, spearheaded by the Caribou [sic] miners of that day, who fought for BC joining Confederation – while the prototypes of today’s Establishment were scheming, conniving and conspiring with US annexationists to make BC a part of the US Northwest.”⁸⁷ It marked the end the centennial year with a long editorial entitled “Big Resource Sellouts Mark Province’s 100 Year History.”



Figure 8: Empty Centennial Promises. *Victoria Times*, 17 June 1970.

⁸⁷ *Pacific Tribune*, 2 May 1969.

Regaling its readers with a tale of Dunsmuir's coal monopoly and its collusion with government, it asserted that little had changed in the past century: "the rule of monopoly capital has emerged full cycle to dominate the economic and political life of British Columbia and its people." This time though, American monopolies had gained the lion's share of BC's resources, "generously handed over by a benign Social Credit government."⁸⁸ Playing up Bennett's courting of US investment was strategic.

Economic nationalism and anti-Americanism was widespread in the late 1960s and early 1970s due to several widely discussed reports arguing that US investment creeping into Canada was to its detriment.⁸⁹ This suspicion of American interests was something socialists and labour shared with the counterculture. The NDP, who would be the beneficiaries of Social Credit's demise, also highlighted a certain aspect of the past. Their leadership convention in 1971 included a "Centennial Room," which featured "displays, words, and pictures of 100 years of socialist struggles in BC"⁹⁰ to offer an alternative history (and future) to that of big capital.

Labour and the unemployed also spread their message to the public. For the opening of the legislative session in centennial year, the BC Federation of Labour organized the unemployed, underemployed, welfare recipients, and the poor to descend

⁸⁸ *Pacific Tribune*, 3 December 1971.

⁸⁹ The 1968 Watkins Report and the 1971 Grey Report detailed the extent of American investment in Canada. Both reports were well received, and spurred the creation of the Committee for an Independent Canada, who, as opinion polls suggested, helped popularize the notion that American ownership of Canadian corporations was a "bad thing." J.L. Granatstein, *Yankee Go Home? Canadians and Anti-Americanism* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1996), 162–166.

⁹⁰ *Cowichan Leader*, 27 May 1971. In 1967, to celebrate Canada's centennial, the BC Federation of Labour sponsored the publication of Paul Phillips' *No Power Greater: A Century of Labour in British Columbia* (Vancouver: B.C. Federation of Labour, 1967).

upon the legislative grounds to expose the sham of the “good life.” The *Georgia Straight* correspondent saw the occasion as such: “Centennial celebrations will commence as BC power looks fondly back over 100 years of exploiting the poor and the province from within Confederation.”⁹¹ But the protestors did not think they were powerless; their aim was “to jolt the provincial government into a massive program to deal with the present time unemployment crisis.”⁹²

The Victoria Low Income Group took another tactic to publicize its cause. The president of the organization, Walter Olszewski, garnered media attention by asking Queen Elizabeth II to postpone her visit to British Columbia until economic conditions were more favourable and employment more stable. “We realize that the Royal Family’s entertainment may cost this government close to a quarter of a million dollars,” he wrote to the Queen in a registered letter, reasoning that the same amount could go towards “easing the suffering of the poor” if she declined to come.⁹³ Olszewski was not surprised to find out in early 1971 that the visit would proceed, so he invited the Queen to attend a “poor people’s banquet” serving wieners and beans in Victoria’s downtown core.⁹⁴ She did not attend, but he got the media coverage needed to keep the interests of the poor in the public’s eyes. This included a Gorde Hunter cartoon, depicting Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip standing on the bow of the H.M.Y. Britannia surveying the Victoria

⁹¹ *Georgia Straight*, 13 January 1971, 2.

⁹² *Nanaimo Daily Free Press*, 20 January 1971.

⁹³ *Victoria Times*, 19 November 1970.

⁹⁴ *Georgia Straight*, 16-20 April 1971, 6 and *Vancouver Province*, 23 April 1971.

Harbour and incredulously exclaiming “All this way for wieners and beans? You’d think they’d at least take us to the Princess Mary!”⁹⁵

However, labour was not totally ignored in the centennial celebrations. In fact, a Labour Activities Subcommittee had existed since the ’58 celebrations but played a minor role in the past celebrations, acting as a liaison to “keep the various labour organizations abreast with the developments and seek their support and advice and guidance during the celebrations.”⁹⁶ This time, when labour had much at stake, it demanded a more activist role within the centenary. Sub-committee Chair, E.T. Staley, a former president of the BC Federation of Labour, told the other members that they should be “very serious” about the centennial or “forget about it altogether.”⁹⁷ The members wanted an important and permanent project, and tossed around ideas like retirement housing for trade unionists, a BC labour college, a fish hatchery or a pollution treatment center.⁹⁸ This Subcommittee ran into the same issue as the Youth Subcommittee; only local committees would be allowed permanent projects. Therefore, it proposed one large project “worthy of the labour movement” - a one hundred thousand dollar trailer featuring labour history and labour opinions to tour the province. Once submitted, the Centennial Committee board offered to pay only a third of that amount.⁹⁹ With such a

⁹⁵ *Victoria Daily Colonist*, 13 April 1971. The Princess Mary was a restaurant and local landmark.

⁹⁶ British Columbia Centennial Committee, *The Report of the British Columbia Centennial Committee* (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1959), 61 and Canadian Confederation Centennial Committee of British Columbia, *A Tale of Two Centenaries: The Report of the Canadian Confederation Committee of British Columbia* (1968), 40. The wording is exactly the same in both reports.

⁹⁷ BCA, Provincial Secretary, G91-030, Minutes of the Labour Activities Subcommittee, 15 January 1970.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 19 February 1970 and 19 March 1970.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 18 August 1970 and *Vancouver Sun*, 29 May 1971.

paltry amount to work with, the Subcommittee canceled the project, believing the Committee had purposely hobbled the project for political reasons. In support, the Vancouver and District Labour Council wrote a letter of protest to Bennett and told the press “Laurie Wallace didn’t agree that labour should have something first class; he suggested a nothing role for us.”¹⁰⁰ The final report of the centenary notes that while it was “impractical” to carry forward their project, the Subcommittee did encourage labour to take part in the celebrations and attracted the Canadian Labour Congress to host a meeting in Vancouver.¹⁰¹ This was certainly a far cry from the activist stance the Subcommittee hoped to take.

This chapter has demonstrated the ways in which the post-war consensus and the enthusiasm for Sacred celebration had broken down by 1971, and how new segments of society utilized the centenary as a blistering critique of government policies. In the run-up to the centenary and throughout the centennial year, special interest groups and ordinary people protested the conservatism and the frontier mentality of the government in many small and large ways. One example illustrates how a critical mass of various protestors marred the unity that centennial was supposed to create. On Canada Day at Victoria’s legislative buildings in 1971 Bennett hosted Prime Minister Trudeau at a celebration “of the type that only William Andrew Cecil Bennett seems capable of organizing” complete with picnics, the start of the London to Victoria air race, proclamations, bands and music. But contrary to the anticipated spirit of the celebrations, members of the assembled crowd carried placards “protesting everything from high unemployment to the seal hunt in the Gulf of St. Laurence, from U.S. domination of the

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹ *The Celebration of the Century: 1871-1971*, 39.

Canadian economy to low old age pensions” according to the *Vancouver Sun*. Scuffles broke out when “a middle-aged man” grabbed signs out of the hands of a few people protesting the proposed U.S. nuclear test on Amchitka island and “punched out one of the demonstrators.” Another scuffle broke out “when an elderly woman took a swipe with her cane at three young girls who were shouting ‘free abortion on demand.’”¹⁰² Such a scene would not have taken place during BC’s first centennial celebration. The following year, in 1972, when W.A.C. Bennett and his party hit the road in a lackluster election campaign, protestors likewise followed him. Just as in the centennial, his government paid them little heed. “To Bennett’s mind, demonstrators were small groups of visual polluters without any following among ordinary people tied to home, hearth and social credit.”¹⁰³ By paying attention to discourse in the media and in the ’71 centennial Bennett should have known that British Columbians were no longer able to celebrate what Social Credit stood for.

¹⁰² *Vancouver Sun*, 2 July 1971.

¹⁰³ Robin, *Pillars of Profit*, 306.

Conclusion

With the 2008 sesquicentennial nearly upon us, this dissertation is a timely study of both the physical and hegemonic province building undertaken some fifty years ago by the W.A.C. Bennett government on the occasion of the centenary of mainland colonial status. This study exposes the careful and methodical way in which the provincial government, working through its Centennial Committee, created a new narrative in the province. Historic commemorations provide a space for states to construct usable pasts. As Hobsbawm and Ranger note, “modern nations...generally claim to be the opposite of novel, namely rooted in the remotest antiquity and the opposite of constructed, namely human communities so ‘natural’ as to require no definition other than self-assertion.”¹ Through a careful attention to meaning present in “texts” – centennial literature, news releases, films, images, and historical re-creations – my study reveals that the Social Credit agenda, and its hegemonic discourse, was woven throughout the most innocuous of projects, so as to be unnoticed and unremarkable. Through commemorative projects, written history, historical re-creations, and province-wide events, the 1958, 1966/67 and 1971 centenaries provided the government a powerful means to invent a unified pioneering identity and enthusiasm for a development-oriented future.

This dissertation begins with a government body –the Centennial Committee – that has largely escaped notice in British Columbia’s historiography, despite its role in the writing, replication and preservation of the province’s history in the mid-twentieth century. Political studies on the W.A.C. Bennett government have also overlooked this

¹ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, “Introduction” in *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 14.

vital Committee in provincial cultural development. My dissertation reveals another layer to the working of the state. I argue that the work of the Centennial Committee in carrying out the celebrations was no less important than other province building ventures in the postwar years. It was a creation of the government; the main decision-makers were politicians and civil servants who abided by Premier Bennett's instructions that no expense should be spared in carrying out elaborate, province-wide celebrations. For instance, the per capita grant scheme was Bennett's populist wish. He wanted centennial funds to be spread throughout the province so that all regions could participate equally. While this was a ploy to curry political favour, and was particularly transparent with such events as traveling cabinet meetings, it was also part of the creation of a particular new British Columbia identity. The Centennial Committee was a convenient vehicle through which the government could deploy, maintain, and reinforce a new provincial commonsense. As an arm's length institution whose official purpose was to celebrate the achievements of the province, few citizens questioned its origins or existence. Further, many reproduced and replicated its version of the past, particularly in 1958 with stagecoach hold-ups and beard growing. Hegemony, scholars maintain, is "part of a dominant worldview which has been naturalized and, having hidden itself in orthodoxy, no more appears as ideology at all."²

Following Hobsbawm's work on hegemony, and the work of other cultural historians, this dissertation interrogates the official symbols, slogans, and history that were disseminated by the Committee. I contend that through instituting the per capita grant system, traveling entertainments, and province-wide celebratory days, the W.A.C.

² Jean and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 25.

Bennett government demonstrated a keen desire to unify citizens through celebration. This was a similar process to that of other states in the twentieth century.³ Further, the government pushed “progress” and the exultation of contemporary industry as a commonality to which all British Columbians could support – no matter their regional differences. The British Columbia International Trade Fair, the industrial caravan, Princess Margaret’s official openings, and comparisons to past industry in historical recreations exemplify this aspect of the celebrations. These related desires – the forging of provincial unity through industrial development – were perfectly realized through the Committee’s mascot, Century Sam. In choosing a fictional cartoon miner who bore no resemblance to any British Columbian, past or present, the Committee could overcome the diversity of the province and the regional squabbles that broke out over the “date” of BC’s birthday. In analyzing the literature accompanying Sam, I also demonstrate that Sam was invented to remind British Columbians that the conquest of landscape in search for riches was part of their heritage. In an age where modernity put white masculinity into question,⁴ he allowed white men to celebrate primal masculinity with its spirit of risk, adventure and self-sufficiency.

On the streets and riverfronts of British Columbia communities, citizens could also witness and participate in re-creations of what was deemed to be the “story” of British Columbia. Here, the government served as cultural producer; in order to inculcate development-oriented values, it drew upon a limited (and sometimes fictional)

³ See for instance Robert Cupido, “Appropriating the Past: Pageants, Politics, and the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* (1998): 155-186 and H.V. Nelles, *The Art of Nation-Building: Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec’s Tercentenary* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

⁴ See Chris Dummitt, *The Manly Modern: Masculinity in Postwar Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007).

representation of the past. Museum theorist Tony Bennett succinctly reminds us “the past...is inescapably a product of the present which organizes it.”⁵ As the government was engaging in massive developmental and infrastructure projects, such as dam and highway construction, the past served to create consensus. With its stagecoach and Fraser re-creations, the government selected a tradition of transportation that complemented contemporary highway and rail building, and sought to “link” communities together. The click of horses’ hoofs on modern highways certainly reminded British Columbians of the progress made in the transportation narrative.

Although my study deconstructs many markers of the centennials to focus on the creation of meaning, I would be remiss in ignoring their material contributions to province building. The W.A.C. Bennett government, taking up from where the Coalition government left off, was already engaging in costly, ambitious infrastructure and industrial development, such as the completing the Pacific Great Eastern Railway, constructing new highways and improving old ones, and supporting further private resource extraction. However, many rural communities could not hope to reap the material benefits of the buoyant provincial economy. Their sometimes-shabby appearances and lack of amenities did not instill confidence that the industrial future lay in undeveloped regions. The per capita grant system was a godsend to municipal governments. With it, smaller communities could build basic recreational or cultural facilities, while larger towns and cities could enhance existing recreational, cultural or artistic activities. And, for this government that boasted it ran the province “in the black”

⁵ Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 129.

and was antipathetic to socialism, the system afforded a way to equally fund communities in building capital projects, and, consequently, add to the province's total capital assets.

Cultural promotion as a developmental strategy was also realized through the three centenaries. Never before had such a concerted governmental effort, in such a short period of time, been made to promote arts, heritage and cultural institutions in the province. First, the W.A.C. Bennett government encouraged communities and individuals to embark on cultural endeavors in celebrating the province. Certainly, the government promoted the building of museums, art galleries, public art, archives and arenas as commemorative projects through the per capita grants. It also challenged individuals and groups to write community histories before valuable sources of local knowledge were gone, and by founding the Centennial Cultural Fund, the government ensured the cultural awakening begun by the centennial celebrations would continue. Although threatened by First Nations political claims, the Committee did encourage First Nations arts and cultural expression, although this was often self-serving. Each celebration featured a totem-pole project. While these projects privileged a particular coastal style, that of the Haida, they undoubtedly contributed to the interest in First Nations art. Through the Centennial Contest for Indian Children and the First Citizen's Fund, the government also allowed for the advancement of cultural expression. Second, the government undertook cultural and heritage projects itself. In making the centenary experience extraordinary for all communities, the government hired traveling entertainments. During these years, all regions of the province were privy to both popular and highbrow culture - from Mart Kenny and his Western Gentlemen to the Vancouver Opera. The government also commissioned scholars to write new histories of

the province in *British Columbia: A History*, and *Strangers Entertained*, and purchased communities histories for the provincial archives. Further, the centenaries allowed the government to embark in heritage conservation by rebuilding the gold-rush towns of Barkerville and Fort Steele as centenary projects and to continue their operation. This cultural aspect of province building has gone unstudied until now. In the “rise” of British Columbia’s industrial development in the W.A.C. Bennett years, previous authors neglected concurrent cultural province building.⁶ Although the centenaries contributed much to the cultural landscape of British Columbia, even the cabinet ministers involved did not fully appreciate their role in the cultural and intellectual growth of the province until years afterwards.⁷

BC’s centenaries also helped build capacity in the tourism and manufacturing industries. The British Columbia International Trade Fair showcased British Columbia’s manufacturers and provided an infrastructure for BC business to make international contacts. The BCITF, although started as a centennial event, was quickly elevated to a regular government mandate, occurring every three years. Likewise, the centenaries provided a boost to BC’s burgeoning tourism market. Along with the British Columbia Government Travel Bureau, the Committee marketed British Columbia as a *province* for the first time. And through innovative promotion, such as Bing Crosby’s US television commercials and the Rose Parade entry, the government provided a platform on which private tourism operators could build.

⁶ Refer to the historiography in the introductory chapter for the case of the centennial celebrations themselves. David J. Mitchell’s classic biography *W.A.C. Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1983) makes no mention of any art or cultural initiative.

⁷ BCA, Provincial Archives of British Columbia Interview Collection, 1974-1987, T1375, 8-2, 14, transcript, Ray Williston interviewed by Derek Reimer, 7 October 1975.

This dissertation also considers the ways in which the province's hegemony was contested in the celebrations. The Committee rightly recognized that it would not garner the mass participation it desired without also allowing some accommodation, or "democratic participation" for communities to celebrate as they saw fit. In underlining that the centenaries were primarily for British Columbians, the Committee also called for suggestions as to what should be celebrated, and how. I argue that, for the most part, British Columbians received the 1958 centenary with enthusiasm. Discussion in the provincial papers, letters written to the Committee, and wide participation in events and re-creations pointed to the replication of this hegemony. Undoubtedly, some of the Committee's decisions would be challenged. For instance, commentators objected to the "birth date" chosen, Century Sam's appearance, and the ahistorical route of the stagecoach, but did not fundamentally disagree with the narrative of British Columbia the Committee presented. Some Native commentators did and tied outstanding land claims to the celebrations, while others were more concerned about how First Nations were being represented in the celebration. The Committee's concerns about a First Nations' "boycott" was never realized in 1958 because many First Nations welcomed the opportunity to highlight their artwork and culture in the centenary. For the time being, the government's hegemony found a consensus.

Much stronger counter-hegemonic discourses confronted the government's development agenda in the two later celebrations. This study reveals that the Committee's structure, function, and hegemonic messages were so successful in 1958 that the government did little to change in the following centenaries, leaving the Committee with little flexibility to react to new counter-hegemonies. Moreover, the

W.A.C. Bennett government was much less vigorous and innovative in the last years of its reign. Thus, when BC's citizenry found alternate ideologies – which ran counter to Social Credit's development orientation – they used the centennial celebrations to assert these, and attack the government. In the context of a North American Indian movement, BC's First Nations were more vociferous in criticizing provincial interpretations of history. Even white British Columbians called for a greater recognition of First Nations in BC society. As a result, the Committee accommodated these calls with the creation of an Indian Participation Subcommittee. While its representatives were happy to work through this Subcommittee, its creation did little to fundamentally alter the white hegemony presented in the later centennials. Nor did the Subcommittee's creation allow for the expression of Native political claims since these stood in the way of province building. This study, through the use of numerous letters and letters-to-the editor, also reveals that youth, environmentalists and labour used the centenaries to challenge the big business and development orientation of the government. These new discourses influenced even “establishment” types who questioned the great financial costs involved in celebration. They reasoned that the money could be better spent solving social ills or environmental problems. Although a new Youth Subcommittee was established (and quickly dissolved) the government and its Committee could not accommodate the views of the environmental lobby or labour, lest the hegemony it had created and maintained over the two preceding decades unraveled. Further, these counter-hegemonic values threatened physical province building.

This dissertation endeavors to contribute original insights to BC historiography, and to the field of cultural history in Canada. The history of post-war British Columbia is

spotty, at best. Although good general surveys exist, the dearth of focused studies on British Columbia's post-war years is notable and challenges scholars working on this era.⁸ Although I stumbled upon my topic as a result of this very lack of sources, my study was not undertaken merely to address this disparity. Rather, I could not reconcile what I was learning in my primary research with what I knew about the W.A.C. Bennett government. Indeed, my dissertation contributes a new analytical approach to this government's working. Without the lens of the centenary celebrations, and all that it encompassed, much of what motivated the W.A.C. Bennett government in province building is missed. Not only did it try to connect regions together with ferries, highway construction and the material benefits of the "good life," it was also concerned with cultivating a provincial identity through history, heritage, the arts and common heroes which exemplified the BC spirit of individualism, ruggedness, and entrepreneurialism. This is a complementary view, not a divergent one, to the existing historiography of the postwar years. Through cultural promotion, the province carefully and delicately engaged in a different form of province building.

⁸ Survey histories that provide good coverage of the post-war years include Patricia E. Roy and John Herd Thompson, *British Columbia: Land of Promises* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2005), and Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996). More focused studies on post-war BC which informed parts of this dissertation include Christopher Dummitt, "Risk on the Rocks: Modernity, Manhood, and Mountaineering in Postwar British Columbia." *BC Studies* 141 (2004): 3-29, Arn Keeling & Robert McDonald, "The Profligate Province: Roderick Haig-Brown and the Modernizing of British Columbia" *Journal of Canadian Studies* (Fall 2001): 7-23 and Susan Roy, "Performing Musqueam Culture and History at British Columbia's 1966 Centennial Celebrations." *BC Studies* (Autumn 2002): 55-90. If papers presented at the 2007 BC Studies Conference are representative of new scholarship, it bodes well for the history of post-war BC.

In terms of Canadian cultural history, my study draws on a similar theoretical body to other work on commemoration, but endeavors to rectify a regional and temporal imbalance. Until the present study, scholarship on commemoration and celebration have explored state creation of “useable pasts” in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Ontario and Quebec, or in twentieth century Canadian jubilees and centennials.⁹ While these studies demonstrate that the state and cultural producers often relied on the same *methods* to advance their aims, this should not be a barrier to further study as David Lowenthal reminds us “people the world over refer to aspects of their heritage in the same way. Although they stress quite distinctive histories and traditions, these evince similar concerns with precedence, antiquity, continuity, heroism, sacrifice. Even when exalting unique heroes and virtues, different peoples celebrate success, stability, progress in much the same way.”¹⁰ As a young province, British Columbia’s centennial organizers did not rely upon antiquity, elaborate pageants or processions; but the “popular” motifs it did draw upon - a cartoon mascot, gigantic birthday cakes, popular entertainments - can be seen as no less effective than how other states created usable pasts and invented traditions. In fact, compared to other Canadian commemorations, these were unusual motifs, but served the particular needs of the W.A.C. Bennett government in province building.

⁹ Norman Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists: The Ontario Loyalist Tradition and the Creation of Usable Pasts* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1997); Nelles, *Art of Nation-building*; Cupido, “Appropriating the Past”; and Helen Davies, “The Politics of Participation: A Study of Canada’s Centennial Celebrations” (Ph.D. diss., University of Manitoba, 1999).

¹⁰ David Lowenthal, “Identity, Heritage and History,” in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. John R. Gilles (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 44.

Further, many studies of commemoration and celebration focus on one celebration, providing a “snapshot” of a particular society in a particular moment. I am fortunate to study three BC centenaries that occurred over a thirteen-year period, under the same provincial administration with the same static Centennial Committee. Because of this pattern, I would argue that my study more effectively shows the unevenness of hegemony, and that it is dependant on tolerance and accommodation. Certainly, the creative space the 1958 Centennial Committee allowed British Columbians was enough. They happily tolerated and replicated the government’s hegemony. This limited space, however, was not enough for citizens in the later celebrations who were influenced by new ideologies and counter-hegemonies. To be sure, municipal government and community leaders still played along; but a whole segment of British Columbia’s populace challenged that hegemony. What the government conceded to bring this segment into the fold was too little, too late.

This dissertation also provides a corrective to scholars’ tendency to use the centenaries unproblematically. This is not to suggest, however, that this is a comprehensive overview of the centenaries; my interest and focus of inquiry was the provincial government and the Centennial Committee. What this dissertation has not done is provide a systematic analysis of community celebrations (with over 300 communities participating, this would be daunting!) or variations between local celebrations in different regions, or celebrations staged by ethnic groups, schools, and civic organizations to mark these occasions. While I did look at some communities in depth, particularly Vancouver, Nanaimo, Prince George and Prince Rupert, in terms of their acquiescence or resistance to provincial directives or suggestions, I was more

interested in the relationships between the Committee and its local counterparts, but not necessarily between stakeholders in communities or regions. But for scholars interested in post-war municipal politics or development, a study of the centenaries would yield fascinating results. For instance, considerable local tensions in Vancouver surrounded the 1966/67 and 1971 centennials, due to the brashness of Mayor “Tom Terrific” Campbell, who refused to settle the 1966 civic worker’s strike, leaving tourism operators aghast at the sight of litter filled streets about to welcome tourists.¹¹ Campbell also publicly derided the 1966/67 Vancouver Centennial Committee society as being incompetent, and in 1971, delayed forming a then municipally controlled centennial committee.¹² Nor has this dissertation attempted to analyze local histories written during the centenaries according to their impact on the writing of BC’s history and the province’s historiography. While their production certainly worked to the Committee’s aim at community inclusion, equality, and pride, it remains to be seen if they contributed to a new phase of the writing of BC history. Such an analysis could be undertaken as a continuation of Chad Reimer’s 1995 dissertation where his analysis ends at Ormsby’s publication of *British Columbia: A History*.

I also hope this dissertation will prompt critical comparisons to next year’s 2008 sesquicentennial, and the uses of commemoration in modern-day society. Certainly reverberations from decisions made fifty years ago are present: the date of the sesquicentennial, grants for community celebrations, a Fraser River descent re-creation,

¹¹ *Vancouver Province*, May 21 and 27, 1966.

¹² *Vancouver Province*, April 20, 1967 and City of Vancouver Archives, City Clerk Series 2, file: Centennial Projects, Ronald Thompson to Harold Merilees, MLA, 1 February 1971.

and the production of a commemorative work of history.¹³ Time will tell what organizing narrative the Campbell government will pursue in the celebrations, and if it will be any more successful.

¹³ BC2008, www.bc2008.gov.bc.ca <15 June 2007>; *Prince George Citizen*, 14 May 2007, 6; *Daily Townsman* (Cranbrook), 29 January 2007, *Now* (Surrey), 8 June 2007, 20.

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APPENDIX A:

An Act to provide for the Celebration of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Establishment of the Mainland Colony of British Columbia

[assented to 2nd March, 1956]

Whereas the discovery of gold on the Fraser River resulted in a gold-rush in 1858 that transformed the whole region now known as British Columbia:

And whereas an Act “to provide for the Government of British Columbia,” passed by the Imperial Parliament on the second day of August, 1858, created the Mainland Colony of British Columbia and foreshadowed the ultimate union of all British possessions west of the Rocky Mountains:

And whereas the original Colony of British Columbia was inaugurated with due ceremony at Fort Langley on the nineteenth day of November, 1858:

And whereas it is desirable to provide for the appropriate celebration of the centenary of these events:

Therefore, Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of British Columbia, enacts as follows: --

1. This Act may be cited as the “Centennial Celebration Act.”
2. There is hereby created a corporation (hereinafter referred to as the “Committee”) which shall be a body politic and corporate under the name of the “British Columbia Centennial Committee.”
3. It shall be the object of this Committee, and the Committee shall have power, and it shall be the duty of the Committee: --
 - (a) To make and carry out all necessary arrangements for the organizing of a suitable and effective celebration of the centenary of the founding of the Mainland Colony of British Columbia:
 - (b) To enter into agreement or arrangement with any person, society, association, organization, or corporate body for the purpose of planning, co-ordinating, and organizing the centennial celebration:
 - (c) To make such orders as are from time to time required for the purpose of co-ordinating, planning, and organizing the centennial celebration.
4. The membership of the Committee shall be composed of such persons appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council as may from time to time be deemed advisable and desirable, and all members shall hold office until their appointments are rescinded.
5. Upon recommendation of the Committee, the Lieutenant-Governor in council may appoint such honorary officers and such honorary members to the Committee as may from time to time be deemed desirable, but no appointment under this section shall in any way limit the powers of the Committee.
6. The members, honorary officers, and honorary members shall serve without remuneration, but may be reimbursed for any expenses necessarily incurred by them in

the execution of their duties in such manner and in such amounts as the Lieutenant-Governor in Council may direct, and all such expenses shall be a charge upon the revenues of the Committee.

7. The management, administration, all business and affairs, and the control of the revenues and expenditures of the Committee shall be vested in a Board of Directors (hereinafter referred to as the "Board").

8. The Board shall consist of eight members of the Committee selected and appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, all of whom shall hold office until their appointments are rescinded.

9. Five members of the Board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of all business of the Committee.

10. Without limiting the general powers by the Act conferred upon or vested in the Committee, the Board shall have power: --

- (a) To make, subject to the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, such regulations as are considered necessary or desirable for the purpose of carrying into effect the provisions of this Act according to their true intent, and of supplying any deficiency therein:
- (b) To make any provisions not inconsistent with this Act that may be necessary to meet exigencies occurring under its operation, and generally from time to time to make and enforce all such general rules and orders as may be necessary for the purpose of giving full effect to the provisions of this Act and the regulations:
- (c) To make rules and regulations appertaining to the meetings of the Committee and its transactions:
- (d) To appoint from time to time its Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and other officers:
- (e) To appoint such sub-committees, composed of members, honorary members of the Committee, or any other persons, as may from time to time be necessary:
- (f) To establish a centennial advisory council, consisting of such persons who, by virtue of their residence and activities, have contributed to the historical, cultural, and industrial development of the Province of British Columbia;
- (g) To appoint or dismiss an executive secretary, a treasurer, and other such officers, clerks, and employees as may be necessary and fix their salaries;
- (h) To administer all funds, grants, gifts, and other assets, real or personal, received by the Committee:
- (i) To acquire by lease, rental, purchase, or otherwise all equipment, materials, supplies, accommodation, or other appurtenances as may be necessary for the purpose of giving full effect to the provisions of this Act:
- (j) To make grants to many person or persons, society, association, organization, or corporate body, as may be necessary to assist in the financing of the centennial celebration:
- (k) To select an emblem for the Committee and have sole custody and use of the emblem:
- (l) To do and perform all other matters, things, and duties which may be necessary for the advancement of the centennial celebration.

11. The Committee shall be financed and maintained as follows: --

- (a) By grants from the Government of British Columbia authorized by an appropriation of the Legislature for that purpose:
- (b) By such grants for gifts as may from time to time accrue to the Committee:
- (c) Failing an appropriation of the Legislature for the purpose of providing the amounts to be paid by the Province under this section, the amounts to be paid by the Province shall be a charge upon and paid out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

12. The executive secretary shall keep a record of the proceedings of the Committee and perform all other duties as the Board may prescribe in relation to the corporate affairs of the Committee.

13. The treasurer shall keep such records, books, and accounts and perform such other duties as the Board may prescribe in relation to the corporate affairs of the Committee, and such records and all book, accounts, vouchers, and papers of the Committee shall at all times be subject to inspection of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council.

14. The accounts of the Committee shall be audited at least once a year by the Comptroller-General, or by some person appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council.

15. The Committee shall not incur any liability or make any expenditure beyond the amount unexpended of the grant made to the Committee by the Legislature and the estimated revenue of the Committee from other sources for the current year, unless an estimate thereof has been first submitted to and approved by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council.

16. No action shall be brought against the Committee, or against the Board, or against any sub-committee, or against any member or honorary member of the Committee, or against any member of the advisory council, or against any employee of the Committee, on account of anything done or omitted by him in the execution of his office, unless the written consent of the Attorney-General to the bringing of the action is obtained.

17. Any person using in any way the emblem of the Committee, except on written authorization of the Committee, shall be liable, on summary conviction, to a penalty of not more than fifty dollars.

18. The Lieutenant-Governor in Council may, by Proclamation, convene a meeting of the members then appointed, at a place and on a date set forth in such Proclamation.

19. The Lieutenant-Governor in Council may, by Proclamation, fix a day or days which shall be a public holiday for the celebration of the centenary of the founding of the Mainland Colony of British Columbia.

20. Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act, after completion of the centennial celebration and when the purposes for which the Committee was created have been fully carried out, the Lieutenant-Governor in Council may, when the affairs of the Committee are terminated to his satisfaction, direct the disposition of all moneys and other assets, real or personal, vested in the Committee, and may order the

dissolution of the Committee, and the corporate powers of the Committee shall be deemed to have ceased on the date of such order.

APPENDIX B:

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