

PACIFIC PROVINCES...

B. C. THOSE letters have been the butt of many jokes ranging from bad to indifferent among initial-minded funsters. We've heard everything from "Before Civilization" to "Bad Cess!" And we don't mind a bit. In fact, those of us who got 'Beyond Control' have played around with many of our own variations — from Bigger Cocktails, through Blatant Conceit and Bad Conscience — to Blasted Careers!

In recent years, however, we've taken on a couple of letters. Twin A's. To us in B.C. it is a delightful coincidence that A is the only letter which can properly and traditionally be placed before B and C. The combination has proved a happy one — double A, B.C.! Elementary!

And we propose to *keep* AA in B.C. as elementary as the alphabet.

AA in B.C. started in Vancouver. You can read all about it in the following pages. Meanwhile, if you'll look at your map you'll see that there's an awful lot more to British Columbia. Greater Vancouver constitutes about one half of

the total province population.

Once you leave Vancouver and urban Vancouver Island, there just aren't any more real cities. Perhaps you wonder how AA makes out in a country where the jumps between towns are practically an explorer's project.

Podner, this is Big Country! From the U.S. border to Alaska and from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean there is such grandeur that, upon seeing it, you might wonder how a man can get himself so loused up in such surroundings. You'd wonder too how a fellow could have any difficulty in acknowledging a Higher Power when the very air he breathes and the scenes that fill his eyes are overwhelming and awe inspiring proof.

But we did!

To you people in large metropolitan areas, twenty or thirty AA groups may not sound like much. You've got that many within a half hour's drive, probably. But up here twenty odd up-province groups represents something of a miracle of communication, navigation, and determination. And perhaps 'odd' is the right word for ears not trained to the sound of some of our B.C. names.

Let's just try on a few for size, to see how they fit your tongue. Right down on the U.S. border, smack dab on it, four AAs hold forth in Osoyoos and lay claim to being positively the biggest group

along the Okanagan river. Further east toward your Idaho and just barely in Canada is Trail. Until AA came it was a Lonesome Trail.

Directly north of Osoyoos are two thriving AA groups, Penticton and Kelowna. Both are situated on the Okanogan river which would seem to gainsay the proud claims of the Osoyoos quartet. But group tolerance runs high out here and we're perfectly sure that Osoyoos is the biggest group on *their part of the river*.

Continuing our poor man's Cook's Tour, we go on northward past Revelstoke. Now there's a name right out of Sir Walter Scott for you! Slightly to the northwest of this romantic sounding place and Glacier National Park stands the Quesnel group. It is set in the Caribou mountains and Quesnel is quoted as saying that it was driven to drink by a pesky neighbor, Horsefly!

The Chilliwack group, in the Fraser river valley just east of Vancouver, wants it clearly understood that it was not named by an Indian full of firewater. It's an old Siwash name — and since AA came to town, there's nothing either chilly or wacky about it.

If you were ever a reader of English novels of the Victorian era you've no doubt heard about 'remittance men.'

Offhand we can't say that we know any remittance men in AA. However, we do have a group

which by the sound of its name and the nature of its location would seem to have been a logical destination for these unwanted souls. 'Way up the coast, at the point where Alaska juts down in the Alexander Archipelago there's a town with the Graustarkian name of Prince Rupert — in Refuge Bay. It would seem a likely haven for remittance men.

In Prince Rupert six AAs hold forth in a climate meant for brass monkeys and strong rum. And down the coast a bit, on Princess Royal Island, the Butedale group also makes a brave stand.

So you see that neither distances nor geography, climate nor topography seems able to deter the growth and spread of AA. There just ain't no frontiers, real or imagined. Put a salmon fisherman from up Prince Rupert way in the same room with a Texas cowhand and, in one minute flat, you'd have an AA meeting under way -- a kind of brotherhood of man which seemingly, in these days, only drunks understand.

To get back to our initial premise we're told that 'BC' in the States stands for a headache powder, a hangover potion of great renown. But when B.C. itself had a hangover we found relief only in AA. Anyhow, it's nice to have had this visit on paper. We'd like it better if you'd come up for an in-person visit. We hope that soon B.C. will be seeing you!