

# A Fact Sheet for Canadian Disasters

Oct 5, 1825 - The Miramichi fire began after a dry summer, devastating timberland and destroying Douglstown and Newcastle. Some 200 to 500 people were killed.

May 22, 1826 - The greatest known flood of the Red River in Manitoba destroyed the Red River Colony. The water crested on May 22, two and a half weeks after the flood began.

Jan 23, 1834 - Fire destroyed the famous Château Saint-Louis at Québec.

Jun 28, 1845 - Fire struck Saint-Jean, Québec, jumping from house to house and destroying 1300 homes. In total, more than 18 000 people were left homeless.

Jun 9, 1846 - A fire in St John's, Newfoundland, leveled most of the city.

Oct 27, 1854 - At Baptiste Creek, 24 km west of Chatham, Ontario, a gravel train was hit by an express train that was running 7 hours late. The accident killed 52 and injured 48 others, the worst rail disaster in North America to that time.

Nov 24, 1854 - During a vicious storm on Lake Erie, the schooner Conductor foundered. The crew clung to the frozen rigging all night. Next morning Abigail Becker waded shoulder-high into the surf and coaxed the men ashore.

Mar 12, 1857 - A Great Western Railway passenger train crashed through the rotting timber bridge over the Desjardins Canal, near Hamilton, Ontario, killing 59 people.

Jun 29, 1864 - A Grand Trunk Railway train plunged off the Beloeil Bridge into the Richelieu River at St-Hilaire, Québec, killing 99 people and injuring another 100. It was Canada's worst train wreck.

Oct 9, 1867 - In one of the greatest stories of heroism ever recorded, William Jackman threw himself into the icy water off Labrador and rescued 11 of the 27 crew of a foundered ship unassisted. With the help of others he swam out 16 more times.

Apr 1, 1873 - The passenger ship Atlantic, en route to Halifax, blundered onto Meagher's Rock and sank, killing 534 men and one child.

May 13, 1873 - The first mine disaster occurred at Westville, NS. An explosion ripped through the tunnels; 2 years passed before the last of 60 bodies was recovered.

Jun 20, 1877 to Jun 21, 1877 - Fire destroyed a large area of Saint John, NB. It destroyed most of the wharf-side structures, the schooners docked in the slip and much of the city core. Eleven lives were lost.

Feb 25, 1880 - The New Brunswick legislature in Fredericton was destroyed by fire.

Jun 13, 1886 - A devastating fire swept through the city of Vancouver, leaving only Hasting Mills and a few isolated structures in the downtown core standing.

May 3, 1887 - An explosion and fire at a Nanaimo, BC, coal mine killed 150 men, the worst mining disaster in BC history.

Sep 19, 1889 - A massive rockslide smashed much of Champlain Street in Québec City, killing 45.

Feb 21, 1891 - One hundred and twenty-five miners were killed in a coal mine explosion in Springhill, NS.

Jul 8, 1892 - A fire broke out in a barn on Long's Hill and swept through St John's. Some 12 000 people were left homeless as two-thirds of the city was destroyed.

May 26, 1896 - During celebrations for Queen Victoria's birthday, a span of the bridge at Point Ellice in the harbour of Victoria, BC, fell out. A loaded streetcar fell with it and 55 people were killed, the worst streetcar accident in North American history.

Sep 11, 1898 - The city of New Westminster, BC, was destroyed by fire.

Mar 17, 1900 - The 1600 seat theatre of the Académie de musique de Québec was destroyed by fire.

Apr 25, 1900 - Some 15 000 people lost their homes and 3 died as the worst fire in Canadian history destroyed two-thirds of Hull, Québec.

Apr 29, 1903 - A rockslide (commonly called the Frank Slide) from Turtle Mountain, NWT (Alta), onto the town of Frank killed at least 70 people, the most disastrous rock fall in Canadian history.

Apr 19, 1904 - Fire broke out on Wellington Street and spread across downtown Toronto, destroying 98 buildings over 7.7 hectares. Firefighters arrived from as far away as Buffalo, New York.

Jan 21, 1910 - A broken rail caused derailment of a CPR passenger train west of Sudbury, killing 43.

Mar 4, 1910 - An avalanche at Bear Creek in the Rogers Pass engulfed a work crew that had been clearing snow from an earlier slide across the CPR main line. One man survived, 62 were killed, many of them frozen in position by the flash of ice.

Dec 9, 1910 - An explosion in a coal mine at Bellevue, Alta, killed 31 men. It was caused in part by the negligence of the coal company.

Jul 11, 1911 - A forest fire swept into South Porcupine, a ward of Timmins, Ontario, killing about 50 people and burning the town to the ground.

Jun 30, 1912 - A tornado struck the heart of Regina, killing 28 persons and causing millions in damages.

Nov 7, 1913 to Nov 8, 1913 - A November storm rose over the Great Lakes and over the next 4 days sank more than 34 ships with a loss of hundreds of lives.

May 29, 1914 - The CP steamer Empress of Ireland collided with the Norwegian ship Storstad in fog in the Gulf of St Lawrence near Rimouski, Québec. The Empress sank in only 14 minutes and 1014 died.

Jun 19, 1914 - An explosion of methane gas at Hillcrest, Alta, killed 189 men in Canada's worst mining disaster.

Feb 3, 1916 - Most of the original Parliament Buildings in Ottawa were destroyed by fire, killing 7 people. Only the Parliamentary Library survived intact.

Jul 29, 1916 - Fires started by lightning and locomotive sparks combined into a firestorm that struck Cochrane and Matheson, Ontario, burning both towns and killing at least 233 people.

Sep 11, 1916 - A new centre span of the Québec Bridge fell into the river as it was being hoisted into position, killing 13 men.

Dec 6, 1917 - At Halifax, the French munitions ship Mont Blanc collided with the Belgian relief ship Imo. The resulting explosion, the largest before the advent of the atomic bomb, killed more than 1600 people and injured 9000 in Canada's worst disaster.

Jan 23, 1918 - Eighty-eight men died in a mine explosion in the Allan Shaft at Stellarton, NS.

Oct 25, 1918 - The worst shipwreck in Northwest coast history occurred when the Canadian Pacific ship Princess Sophia sank in a severe snowstorm off the Alaskan coast. All 343 people aboard were lost.

Jan 9, 1927 - At a fire that broke out in the Laurier Palace Theatre, Montréal, 76 people died in the panic to escape an overcrowded building.

Sep 21, 1927 - Ten railway cars carrying a valuable cargo of silk went off the rails east of Yale, BC. Five of them ended up in the Fraser River.

Aug 25, 1928 - What has been called Canada's 1st major air disaster occurred when bad weather caused a BC Airways Ford Trimotor plane to crash in Puget Sound, Washington.

Dec 12, 1942 - A fire at the Knights of Columbus Hall in St John's, Newfoundland, claimed 99 lives within 7 terrifying minutes. The hall's auditorium was packed with military personnel and civilians for the radio broadcast of "Uncle Tim's Barn Dance."

Jul 18, 1945 to Jul 19, 1945 - An ammunition barge blew up at the naval magazine jetty on Bedford Basin, Halifax harbour. A chain reaction of fire, explosion and concussion rocked Halifax for a day.

May 28, 1948 - BC's worst flood on record caused 10 deaths and \$300 million in damage along the lower Fraser River. Two hundred families were left homeless, rail service was disrupted for two weeks, and more than 80 bridges washed away.

Sep 9, 1949 - Twenty-three persons were killed when a Québec Airways DC-3 was sabotaged with a bomb and exploded and crashed near St-Joachim, Québec. J.A. Guay and 2 accomplices were convicted and hanged for the crime.

Sep 17, 1949 - The burning of the cruise ship Noronic in Toronto harbour claimed 118 lives.

May 5, 1950 - A flood of the Red River in Manitoba killed one person, forced 100 000 Winnipeg inhabitants to flee their homes and caused \$100 million in damage.

Oct 15, 1954 - Hurricane Hazel, beginning in the Caribbean on October 6, struck Toronto with 124 km/h winds and 10.1 cm of rain in 12 hours; 81 people died and there was extensive property damage.

Nov 1, 1956 - A mine disaster at Springhill, NS, killed 39 men. Another 88 trapped men were later rescued.

Aug 11, 1957 - The first major civilian air disaster in Canada occurred during a violent thunderstorm over Issoudun, 40 km southwest of Québec City, when a chartered Maritime Central Airways DC-4 crashed, killing all 79 aboard.

Jun 17, 1958 - The fourth and fifth spans of the Second Narrows Bridge in Vancouver collapsed as a result of an engineering miscalculation. Eighteen workers were killed.

Oct 23, 1958 - A coal mine explosion at Springhill, NS, killed 74 miners; 18 were rescued from levels as deep as 3960 m, the deepest rescues ever conducted in Canada.

Oct 12, 1962 - Typhoon Freda hit Vancouver around midnight, with winds greater than 100 kph. The storm lasted about 4 hours, killing 7 people and blowing down a fifth of all the trees in Stanley Park.

Nov 29, 1963 - A TCA airliner with 111 passengers and a crew of 7 crashed after take-off near Ste-Thérèse-de-Blainville, Québec, killing all 118 persons aboard.

Jan 9, 1965 - An avalanche of rock buried a 3-km stretch of the Hope-Princeton highway, killing 4 motorists.

Feb 4, 1970 - The Liberian-registered tanker Arrow ran aground on Cerebus Rock in Chedabucto Bay, NS, spilling 10 500 metric tons of oil onto the water and beaches, causing catastrophic environmental damage.

Jul 5, 1970 - An Air Canada DC-8 crashed near Toronto International Airport, while en route from Montréal to Los Angeles. All 109 passengers and crew were killed.

Aug 2, 1970 - A BC ferry and a Soviet freighter collided in Active Pass. Three passengers on the ferry were killed.

May 4, 1971 - A landslide at St Jean Vianney, Québec, destroyed much of the town and killed 31 residents.

Sep 1, 1972 - Arsonists set fire to the Blue Bird Club in Montréal. Thirty-seven people were killed, 54 injured.

Jan 25, 1973 - The freighter Irish Stardust ran aground north of Vancouver Island, spilling 378 000 L of fuel oil.

Aug 4, 1978 - The worst single-vehicle accident in Canada (and the worst bus disaster in Canada or the US) occurred near Eastman, Québec, as a chartered bus plunged into Lac d'Argent, killing 41 people.

Dec 31, 1979 - Arsonists set fire to Le Club Opemiska in Chapais, Québec, during a New Year's Eve party, killing 42.

Feb 15, 1982 - The Ocean Ranger, the world's largest semi-submersible drill rig, capsized and sank in a storm on the Grand Banks with the loss of all 84 crew members, 56 of whom were Newfoundlanders.

Mar 29, 1985 - Ten airmen were killed when 2 C-130 Hercules transport planes collided in midair and crashed at CFB Edmonton. The planes were flying in formation during a ceremonial fly-past at the base.

May 31, 1985 - A tornado hit Barrie, Ontario, in the worst inland storm since Hurricane Hazel. Some 300 houses were destroyed, at least 8 were killed and thousands were left homeless.

Jun 23, 1985 - The worst air disaster associated with Canada and the third worst in history was the explosion, likely from a terrorist bomb, of Air India Flight 182 from Toronto. The plane crashed into the N Atlantic off the coast of Ireland, killing all 329 on board.

Aug 12, 1985 - The BC ferry Queen of Cowichan collided with a pleasure craft in Horseshoe Bay, killing 3 in the smaller boat.

Feb 23, 1986 - Twenty-three people died in a head-on collision between a CN freight train and a Via Rail passenger train at Hinton, Alta.

Jul 31, 1987 - A tornado swept through parts of southeast and northeast Edmonton, flattening residences and laying waste to an industrial park and a trailer park. Twenty-seven people were killed.

May 9, 1992 - Twenty-six miners were killed at Plymouth, NS, when a blast triggered by the ignition of stray methane led to a chain reaction of lethal methane and coal-dust explosions.

Jun 9, 1995 - Floods in Medicine Hat, Alta, forced some 5000 people from their homes.

Aug 11, 1995 - Subway trains collided in Toronto, killing 3 passengers and injuring 36 in the worst accident in the system's history.

Jul 19, 1996 to Jul 22, 1996 - Flooding caused by torrential rains killed 10 people, destroyed 22 488 homes and left thousands homeless in the Saguenay region of Québec. An inquiry later reported that the region's system of dams was poorly maintained.

May 1, 1997 - The water crested on the worst flood since 1950 in southern Manitoba. The new floodway and 6.5 million sand bags protected Winnipeg but a number of other communities were inundated.

Oct 13, 1997 - A bus crashed into a ravine near Saint-Joseph-de-la-Rive, Quebec, killing 43 people, leaving only 5 survivors, the worst crash in Canadian history.

Jan 5, 1998 to Jan 10, 1998 - A severe winter ice storm raged across eastern Canada causing an estimated \$2 billion damage and leaving 25 dead and 3 million without electric power.

Sep 2, 1998 - Swissair Flight 111 en route from New York to Geneva crashed off Peggy's Cove, NS, killing all 229 people on board.

Jan 1, 1999 - An avalanche in Kangiqsuakujuaq, in northern Québec, crashed into a school, killing 9 people.

Feb 6, 2000 - A high-speed catamaran, The Royal Vancouver, collided with the BC Ferries' Queen of Saanich in the fog in Active Pass, injuring 23 catamaran passengers.

Feb 1, 2003 - Six boys and one girl, all students of Strathcona-Tweedsmuir school in Calgary, died when they were caught in an avalanche in the Connaught Creek Valley, near the Rogers Pass in Glacier National Park, BC.

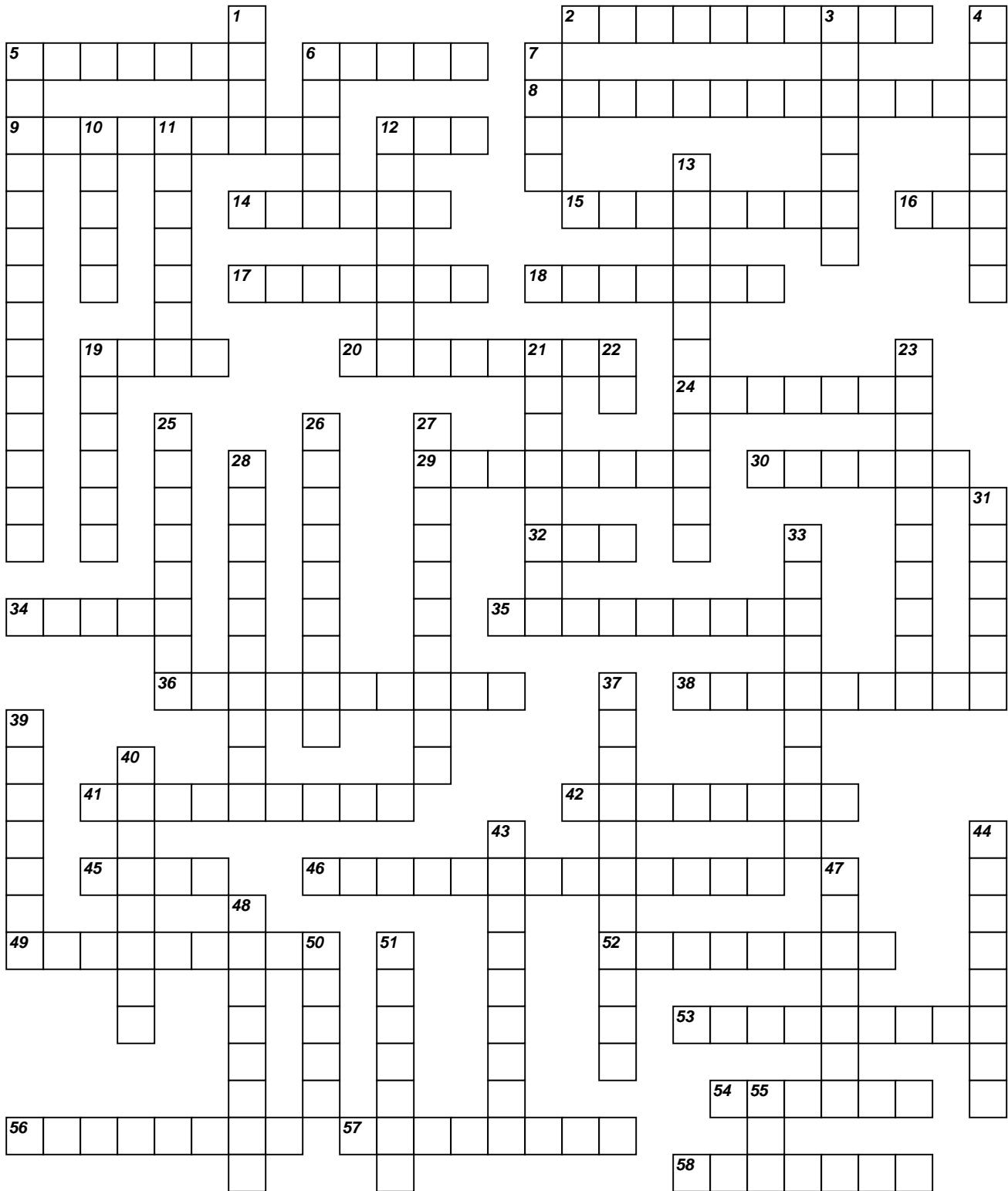
Mar 22, 2006 - BC Ferries' Queen of the North hit a rock near Gil Island and sank while traveling south from Prince Rupert. Two of the 101 passengers were never found.

The items in this fact sheet are from [www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com).  
Check out this website for all sorts of interesting information about Canada.



# Canadian Disasters

## Version D



# *Canadian Disasters*

## *Version D*

### **ACROSS**

- 2 89 men died in a mine explosion in the Allan Shaft in this Nova Scotia community.
- 5 An explosion and fire at a coal mine in this BC city killed 150 men.
- 6 A rockslide from Turtle Mountain killed at least 70 people in this Alberta town.
- 8 (2 words) This freighter ran aground north of Vancouver Island spilling 378 000 L of fuel oil.
- 9 An explosion ripped through a mine in this Nova Scotia community killing 60 miners.
- 12 This kind of storm hit eastern Canada causing an estimated \$2 billion damage and killing 25 people.
- 14 BC's worst flood on record occurred on this river.
- 15 (2 words) 37 people were killed in this Montreal club when arsonists set it ablaze.
- 16 One of these crashed into a ravine near Saint-Joseph-de-la-Rive, Quebec killing 43 people.
- 17 An explosion of this gas in a mine at Hillcrest, Alberta killed 189 men.
- 18 A forest fire swept into part of this Northern Ontario town killing about 50 people.
- 19 Railway cars carrying this cargo went off the rails east of Yale, BC and ended up in the Fraser River.
- 20 Jul 31, 1987 - A tornado killed 27 people in this Alberta community.
- 24 118 people died when this cruise ship burned in Toronto's harbour.
- 29 26 miners were killed at this Nova Scotia community in a blast caused by methane gas.
- 30 300 houses were destroyed and at least 8 people were killed when a tornado struck this Ontario city.
- 32 (3 words) An airliner belonging to this company crashed after take-off near Ste-Thérèse-de-Blainville, Québec.
- 34 This hurricane struck Toronto with 124 km/h winds and 10.1 cm of rain in 12 hours; 81 people died.

- 35 An avalanche of rock buried a 3 km stretch of highway between Hope, BC and this community.
- 36 A mine disaster in this community killed 39 men and trapped 88.
- 38 They caused a fire at Le Club Opemiska in Chapais, Quebec that killed 42.
- 41 One of these collided with the BC Ferries' Queen of Saanich injuring 23 passengers.
- 42 6.5 million sand bags were used to protect this city from the flooding Red River.
- 45 15 000 people lost their homes when a fire destroyed two-thirds of this Québec city.
- 46 (2 words) She waded into Lake Erie's surf and rescued the crew of the schooner "Conductor".
- 49 (2 words) Fire destroyed most of this New Brunswick city's wharf-side structures, a number of schooners and much of the city core.
- 52 (2 words) This colony was destroyed by a massive flood.
- 53 (2 words) A DC-8 belonging to this company crashed near Toronto International Airport killing all 109 people aboard.
- 54 A Great Western Railway passenger train crashed through one of these near Hamilton, Ontario, killing 59 people.
- 56 This Norwegian ship collided with Storstad a CP passenger ship in fog in the Gulf of St Lawrence.
- 57 52 people were killed and 48 injured 48 others when a passenger train collided with a freight train near this Ontario creek.
- 58 A broken rail caused derailment of a CPR passenger train west of this Ontario town killing 43.

### **DOWN**

- 1 An explosion in this kind of mine at Springhill, NS killed 74 miners.
- 3 28 people were killed when one of these struck Regina, Saskatchewan.
- 4 One of two Ontario towns destroyed by fires started by lightning and locomotive

# *Canadian Disasters*

## *Version D*

- sparks. At least 233 people died.
- 5** (2 words) This BC city was destroyed by fire.
- 6** This typhoon blew down a fifth of all the trees in Vancouver's Stanley Park.
- 7** It destroyed the 1600 seat theatre of the Académie de musique de Québec.
- 10** 34 of these were lost when the Great lakes were struck by severe storms.
- 11** (2 words) 23 people died in a collision between a CN freight train and a passenger train belonging to this company.
- 12** The CP steamer Empress of \_\_\_\_\_ collided with the Norwegian ship Storstad near Rimouski, Quebec. 1014 died.
- 13** (2 words) Flooding forced 5000 people in this Alberta community to leave their homes.
- 19** A collision in Toronto's \_\_\_\_\_ killed 3 and injured 36.
- 21** An aircraft of this type belonging to BC Airways crashed in Washington's Puget Sound.
- 22** This province's legislature was destroyed by fire.
- 23** (2 words) The site of collision between a BC ferry and a Soviet freighter.
- 25** Two transport planes of this type collided in midair and crashed at CFB Edmonton.
- 26** This ship blew up in Halifax harbour killing more than 1600 people.
- 27** 125 miners were killed in a coal mine explosion in this Nova Scotia community.
- 28** A fire in one of these in St John's, Newfoundland killed 99 military personnel and civilians.
- 31** An avalanche at this pass engulfed a work crew that had been clearing snow from an earlier slide across the CPR main line. 62 were killed.
- 33** Only Hasting Mills and a few isolated structures in this city's downtown core were left standing after a devastating fire.
- 37** This kind of miscalculation led to the collapse of the Second Narrows Bridge in Vancouver.
- 39** (2 words) A fire levelled most of this city.
- 40** This region of Quebec was hit by torrential rains that killed 10 people and destroyed 22 488 homes.
- 43** A forest fire in this region of New Brunswick devastated timberland and killed between 200 and 500 people.
- 44** One of two Ontario towns destroyed by fires started by lightning and locomotive sparks. At least 233 people died.
- 47** A bomb caused Air India Flight 182 to crash into the North Atlantic off the coast of \_\_\_\_\_.
- 48** The BC ferry Queen of \_\_\_\_\_ collided with a pleasure craft in Horseshoe Bay.
- 50** BC Ferries' Queen of the \_\_\_\_\_ after hitting a rock near Gil Island.
- 51** 41 people died when a bus plunged into Lac d'Argent near this Quebec community.
- 55** A flood of this river in forced 100 000 people to flee their homes.

