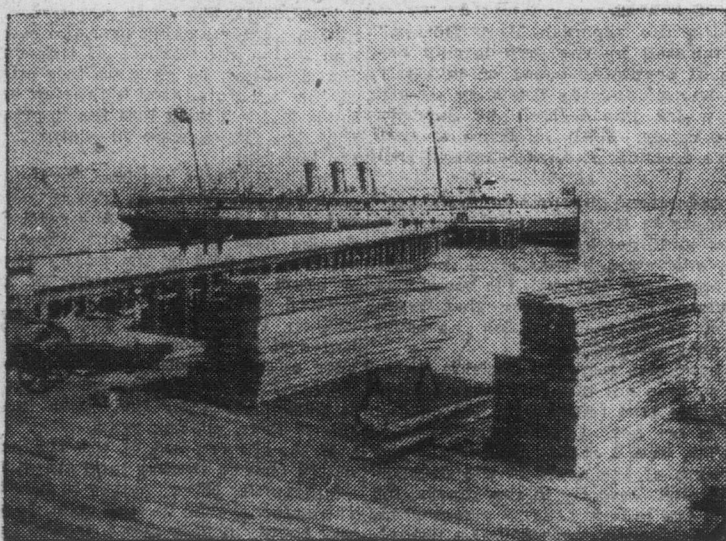


Queen Charlotte Islands and City of Prince Rupert

(BY R. E. GOSNELL.)

Live-laden with 250 souls, the Princess Charlotte steamed into Skidegate channel early Monday morning, May 10th, and tied up to a new and ample wharf at Queen Charlotte townsite. The low heavy bass of the sander was responded to again and again by the tenor notes of the sawmill whistle, and many expectant eyes on board saw a uniformed body of Indian cornet players advancing in good order welcoming them with strains of hand music. The morning was delightful, and the atmosphere, clear and refreshing, was replete with odors of salt water and forest. The Skidegate band was a picture in green, with bright yellow trimmings, very striking and picturesque. One noted immediately the marked physical characteristics of the Hydah, as contrasted with the coast Siwash—large, well-formed, regular features, and a general contour that suggested Japanese origin, only on a larger scale. Some of them would pass as handsome in any assembly of men, while as you strolled through the Indian encampment, you were struck by the beauty of the Skidegate village, six miles away, for the occasion, it was impossible not to observe the decidedly good looks of some of the women—all of them superior in appearance to our Klondiker.



STEAMER PRINCESS CHARLOTTE AT WHARF AT QUEEN CHARLOTTE

been told by old-timers that before civilization left its impress upon the Hydahs, there were many beautiful maidens among them. The native population of the island has been reduced to about 300, and it cannot be said by any means to represent the stock. Formerly there was a population of between 5000 and 6000, a powerful nation of their time, of warlike instincts, one of the two strong nations dominating the coast. Their great rivals, were the Tsimpsians, whose main habitation was in the vicinity of Metlakahla, on the opposite shore. But of this more anon.

The Voyage Up.

The good ship Princess Charlotte, having left Vancouver at 10 a.m. Saturday, made the well-known passage past Nanaimo, Texada and Lasqueti islands and through Seymour Narrows, past Jervis Inlet, Toba Inlet, and Bute Inlet, past Campbell, Nimkish, and Adams rivers, past Pelly Bay, Alert Bay, on Cormorant Island, Had-dington and Malcolm islands, past ancient Indian villages, and historic Fort Rupert, and on through Queen Charlotte Sound. This part of the trip is of exceeding interest, myriads of islands, splendid timber, picturesque scenery. Quoting a former description of my own:

"During the time since starting up the straits of Georgia, we have not omitted to note the scenery, which, though not so magnificent a scale as that yet to come, has been nevertheless particularly charming. It has been one long series of subjects for the artists, in which rare and elusive effects have entered—marine sketches, land and water combinations, here depressed and there bold and broken shores, backed by receding benches densely timbered, and away over all, far off and high up, have risen majestically the tops of the coast range of mountains rising the entire length of Vancouver Island on one side, and the mighty peaks of the Cascades of the mainland on the other, giving on the whole sweep of vision, that indefinable charm which 'manifestly' the eye alone can lend. Leaving out the few tide rips, which you experience with delight, you have been gliding, not tripped, over water as smooth as glass, and at times your impressions have been dream-like—now weird and solemn, and again exhilarating. Sea fowl innumerable—gulls, ducks, geese, and others—have kept you company, and occasionally, sometimes frequently, the attention of the party has been diverted to a spouting whale, or a swarm of porpoise, and even land animals, which are to be seen once in a while from the deck."

Going through Seymour Narrows, Captain Troup, with a mystical smile, pointed out where the railway bridge would cross and the rock in the stream which nature had provided as a pier to support the span. Some of the passengers accepted it as an excellent joke, others appeared extremely interested. The sun was setting as we drew away from the straits, and the view in the background was enchanting. Tiers of hills echeloned the shores of the straits, and as we receded, grew bluer and bluer until they finally melted away into a sky where clouds reflected a marvellous glow of subdued colors. Never was a more beautiful picture, only faintly attainable to the painter's brush, and utterly defying the efforts of the camera to reproduce. But the Princess Charlotte, ploughing along at the rate of an ocean steamer, gave but a fleeting glimpse of all these objects of interest. Fortunately for most of us, having entered Queen Charlotte Sound, the ocean swell—the rolling of the deep—helped to make sleep more profound, for it was night. In some cases it was different. At an early hour Sunday morning the Princess was tied up at the wharf in Ikeda Bay, on the knob of

land that projects from the south-east corner of Moresby Island, after passing Provost. Ikeda is a "little Japan," whose eponym Ikeda is local Mikado. At this spot you are introduced at once to the physical characteristics of Moresby Island—rugged scenery, luxuriant growth, big trees, mineral formations.

Ikeda and Thereabouts.

My object in writing this description is not to give particulars of an excursion, having, of course, a real estate flavour, but to furnish a few interesting particulars of the country now exciting interest, and but little known compared with some other parts of the province. The opportunity was afforded of seeing much, gathering a good deal of interesting information, and of obtaining a whole lot of photographs, some of which are here reproduced.

The Ikeda group of mineral claims is the principal and the best developed on the island. There is a fiction abroad that the first of these was accidentally discovered by Ikeda, a fisherman in a stream for trout. The truth seems to be that Ikeda, a shrewd, robust, business-like manager, was engaged by a syndicate of Japanese interested in halibut fisheries, and as the result of

Vancouver Island—big ferns, skunk cabbage, salmon berries, and so on—are seen wherever you go. Needless to say, soil which produces such foliage is of necessity rich, and although the area on Moresby Island suitable for cultivation is limited, wherever a patch of land is cleared it shows great fertility.

Agricultural Land.

Conditions on Graham Island are less pronounced, but of a character similar to those on Moresby. The island is less mountainous and less humid. The southern and western part is very heavily timbered. East and north-east of Massett Inlet there is a large area of agricultural land, which, by the way, has been reserved from sale by the government. Mr. Humphreys, sent up by the department of lands to report on the land within the reserves, concludes by stating: "During the season I ran 112 miles of shore traverse and between 40 and 45 miles of land lines, mostly base lines and pre-emption surveys at Lawn Hill. I find the approximate total area of good land within the government reserve, Graham Island, to be 335,000 acres, of which I should estimate that at least 75 per cent may be brought under cultivation. It comprises the largest area of good agricultural land in one block I have seen in the province. There is probably a further 200,000 acres to the west of Massett Inlet, between there and Naden Harbor again."

A Cattle and Dairy Country.

Referring to the wild cattle on the north end of the island, the progeny of cattle put there 20 or 25 years ago, and of which all but about 100 have been killed off, he says: "I may state that I have never, either in British Columbia or in the North-West, seen finer or better grown or healthier looking stock than those I saw near the east coast. I do not know any part of Canada where a bunch of cattle could be placed and run out winter and summer, and keep in such splendid condition as have these."

From Mr. Humphreys' description and from what I can learn from other sources, the timber on this agricultural land is very much lighter than elsewhere, and in some places the country is quite open. The soil is of a rich deep loam, here and there with moss, and in the main it requires draining, for which the facilities in numerous small streams and rivers are quite adequate. In Mr. Humphreys' opinion the moss when dry is very hard, and without injury to the soil. In places where it had been burned off he found rich grass growing. The best land, it is said, is found in the vicinity of the lakes.

All the conditions in that part of Graham Island, and it is probable too, in a lesser degree, on the west side of Massett Inlet, point to it as a future great dairy country. Massett Inlet, a fine commodious harbor, is connected by a deep navigable channel with Massett Harbor, and thus direct communication is had with Prince Rupert by about 80 miles of steaming.

Small fruit will yield here in greater quantities probably than in any other part of the province, and cherries, plums, and pears ought to do well.

The Coal Fields.

I have not yet referred to the coal

fields. At Queen Charlotte city the formation is distinctly a coal formation, which extends in a broad belt from Skidegate to Massett, although coal croppings have been discovered at various points. Coal was discovered as long ago as 1859 on Skidegate Inlet. The first discovery of moment was made by Mr. W. A. Robertson in 1885. As a result a number of Victoria capitalists were interested, and an area of about 25,000 acres purchased from the government. Some exploration was done and a tunnel run, but operations were suspended, and, although various negotiations have taken place, it was only this year that a deal was concluded for the transfer of the property from its original owners. The promoters of this company have also secured the charter for a railway intended to traverse the island through the coal measures from Skidegate to Massett Inlet. To what extent these enterprises will be carried on is at present unknown, and upon such development, and upon other industrial development, the future of a townsite will largely depend. It anticipations are realized, Queen Charlotte city, or some other site that may assert its superiority, ought to become a town of some size and importance. At least, a portion of the townsite here is well suited

among the older of the tribes, but there is ocular demonstration that the tradition is true. I was shown the stumps of very old cedar trees, very much decayed and bleached, that had been cut down with stone axes. A stringer used in the erection of a chief's house had also been unearthed. Long before white men came to the islands, and that is 125 years ago, a fell disease entered the village and swept away the entire tribe. Of course the disease was smallpox, which had come to them from the Russian coast by communication with Alaska Indians.

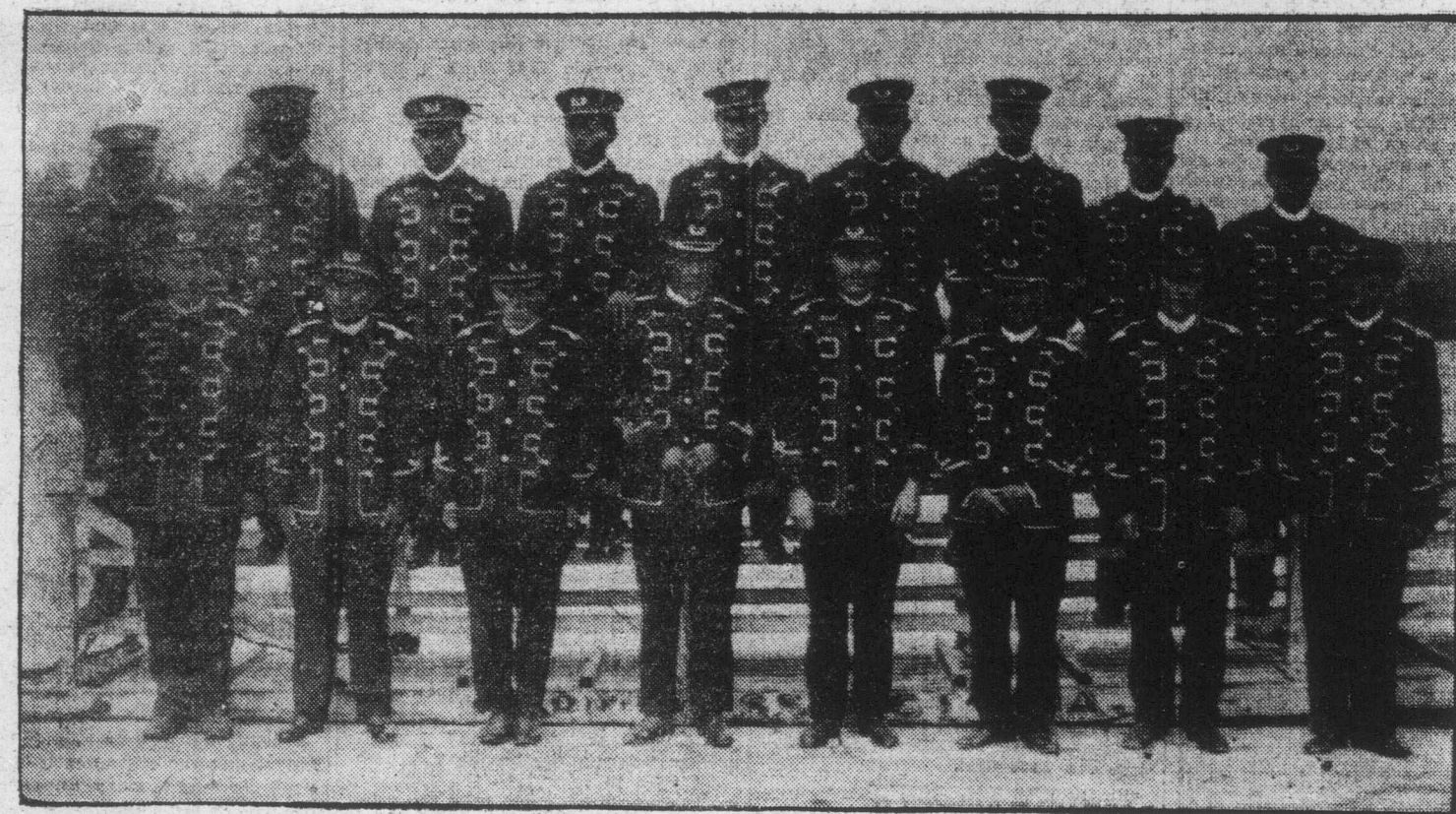
On the islands of the inlet, and in fact in many parts of the Queen Charlotte group, the remnants of ancient villages are seen, some in the nature of cleared spaces, and in others there are, in addition, totem poles. On Maude Island, just opposite the townsite, there are perhaps half a dozen. Fifty years ago these totems were very much more numerous than now, as may be judged from the older photographs which were taken. Some of these have been burned, others fallen down and rotted away, and a few been purchased for museums. There is a pathetic side to the memories of this once great nation. A population dwindled to 300, old landmarks being removed, the ancient art of carving dis-

other saw mill at Jedway, at Harriet Harbor, near Ikeda. Both seem to be doing a good business, with a market in Prince Rupert. Some local feeling exists on account of these mills being manned by Japanese labor, the little brown man apparently having a good bit of his own way along the island's coast. Jedway, by the way, is not, as generally supposed, a Japanese name. It is an English corruption of an Indian name meaning "fish traps." At Jedway is located the government offices, at which there is a local mining recorder. There is also an hotel. Near Jedway are located several important groups of copper claims, and it may fairly be regarded as the centre of the metalliferous mining industry up to the present time.

Before quitting the islands for Prince Rupert, reference must not be omitted to the local paper established at Queen Charlotte city. It is owned by D. R. Young, the promoter of the excursion, who has just bought a printing plant sufficient for present purposes, one feature of which is an up-to-date press run by gasoline power. Nor should Mexican Tom, a well-known local character, be overlooked, after whom Mexican Tom Trail, running from the east coast to Massett Inlet in a direct line, is named. He was in town the day of the excursion, and was free-

building will proceed on a permanent basis.

I have no opinions to offer as to the value of the city for investment purposes. There is one bit of advice to prospective buyers which should be heeded. They should either have seen the lots they propose or may be induced to purchase, or should have advice from those who have taken pains to inform themselves. Otherwise one is apt to buy more rock or musk than they bargain for. Lots vary very much in character, and it would pay to buy the desired information rather than risk it. There are any number of desirable lots, but there are some blanks in the prize packages. One sees a great number of familiar faces of men who have gone there, as they have gone elsewhere, to renew or add to their fortunes, the same old story of western life. To judge of the population as a whole, one cannot but be impressed with the enterprising, high-class, orderly element which predominates. Undoubtedly the fact that there are no places licensed to sell liquor has had much to do with it. Possibly, in any event, the same people would be there, but the other, and undesirable, element has not been attracted, and as far as I could learn, very few desire to see that condition of things altered, for the present, at least. John House-



HYDAH INDIAN BAND AT SKIDEGATE

for the purpose, but some part of it will be difficult to clear and grade. The location is most picturesque, and abounds with interest. But I would rather not discuss totem poles. I only wish to discuss conditions as they seem to exist.

Indian Relics.

I was told by the chief of the Skidegate tribe, who speaks English well, in fact, all of the younger generation do—that it was the site of an ancient Indian village, the inhabitants of which had been wiped out before the advent of the white man—several hundred years ago or more. Their existence was only a matter of tradition

ing, and ancient traditions dieing out, even the language being remodelled—civilization is a ruthless destroyer. We passed the village of Skidegate, where the largest village is located. Near here is the Skidegate oil works, always a point of interest. This enterprise was started some twenty or twenty-five years ago by Victoria capitalists, and has had varying fortunes. At present it refines several thousand gallons of dogfish oil yearly. As a lubricant this oil is unexcelled, and commands a good market and a good price.

One of Two Features of Interest.

At Queen Charlotte city the Moresby Island lumber company has a large saw mill in operation. There is an-

quently snapped. He has a reputation for wild and western ways, which his dark, foreign look, long hair, and cowboy hat would seem to justify, but he is really a very mild type of desperado, if such he would claim to be. He has pack horses on the trail, and does a fair business in his line. His information and services are valuable to the newcomer looking for land. At Jedway on Sunday evening there were services on board conducted by the local missionary, coincident with which was an exciting Indian canoe race. I should not like to say which proved the greater attraction. The collection for both was on a liberal scale. Subsequently there was an Indian war dance on the wharf.

Off for Prince Rupert.

On Tuesday morning about four o'clock the Princess Charlotte weighed anchor in Skidegate Harbor and went direct to Prince Rupert, where we arrived about eleven o'clock. It was curious to observe the crowds lined along the G.T.P. wharf to see the ship on this her initial voyage to the north. It reminded one of the early days in Vancouver, when a large percentage of the population turned out daily to the C.P.R. station to see the express arrive. It must be recorded without prejudice that it was raining and continuing to rain during our stay. It is not fair to dwell upon that phase of our trip, because it sometimes rains in Vancouver and Victoria, and we may have encountered the "exceptional" weather which the lot of visitors everywhere. It is needless to say that the greatest amount of curiosity was evinced by the excursionists to see the much advertised new terminal city. In a very short time everyone was ashore exploring the townsite. And comes the everlasting question, "What do you think of the new townsite?" The impressions were as varied as the disposition and predilection of the individuals interrogated. Some of us were fortunate enough to be conveyed through the newly-planked streets in the single automobile of the town, and rather enjoyed the experience. The tide was confined to the limitations of the plank streets. Others on foot ventured further afield.

Conditions in Prince Rupert.

One must say that, considering the natural disadvantages of the townsite itself, physically and climatically, wonderful progress has been made. It is impossible that the terminal of a transcontinental shall not become a city of great importance, and where a city must be the hand of man is equal to the emergency. In the rough state of the townsite in rainy weather impressions are apt not to be favorable. The surface is uneven, it is true, but the general contour will compare favorably with, say, Seattle; and now that the trees have all been cut down and cleared away, and drains are being put down the soft spongy soil, known as muskeg, will not doubt consolidate, and the difficulties of making foundations and road building will yearly grow less. A good deal of improvement is already noticeable since last summer. The townsite has been laid out in a scientific way to the very best advantage, and those who buy lots to build in the central portion of the town will have many advantages over residents in most of our coast cities at their start. In the way of plank roads and sidewalks already provided. The town so far is surprisingly well built up, with a good class of building as a rule, though many of them are temporary. As soon as the sale is over

ton still runs the Empire, a weekly paper, and has added a daily, which seems to be well patronized. It is rumored that another paper is to be started shortly.

Old Metlakahla.

A party of us in the afternoon took a steam launch for the ancient Indian village of Metlakahla, once the scene of the missionary Duncan's wonderful labors. When he left for his present abode at Annette Island, he took away about 1000 of the Indians. Only about 300 remain. It is still a pretty place, and gives evidence of a rather high state of civilization. There are many well built, modern looking houses, streets lighted with gasoline lamps, and a fine little church, and several large public institutions. The wall from Prince Rupert for the six miles is one of the prettiest on the coast. The launch is owned by and captained by a half-breed Indian, who also has a store at Metlakahla. He told us many stories on the way about the old times. When the Tsimpsians were the most numerous and powerful nation on the coast, they pointed out on route many of the old village sites, now uninhabited, but used as garden patches. Metlakahla was the winter home of several thousands of Indians, where they had large supplies of food stored up. Their summer home was on the Nahc and Skeena, where they fished and hunted. He described them as very cruel. They waged war and took many slaves, and Indians of other tribes who came within their domain hungry or easy were immediately killed, "always killed," he said. Even after Missionary Duncan came among them there were many scenes of bloodshed. That time has passed, and the Tsimpsians are the most civilized and best conducted of the native peoples on the coast.

Homeward Bound.

On the way back the Princess Charlotte took the regularly traveled route. Unfortunately, much of the trip to Milbank Sound was taken during the night or in wet foggy weather, and the beauties of the fine stretch of northern scenery, the finest on the coast, was lost—past impressive mountains, and magnificent waterfalls, and through a great maze of islands and across the mouths of long deep inlets. A stop was made at Swanson Bay, where a saw mill is in operation, and where the new pulp works are in course of completion. Manager McKinnon met the excursionists at the wharf, and piloted them through the buildings, explaining the various machines and the processes to be employed. The company have spent a very large sum of money in installing a 35-ton sulphide pulp plant, and expect to be in full swing during the month of July. Here new industry is about to be inaugurated, the success of which will mean much for the industrial future of the coast, and the visit to the plant excited the greatest amount of interest. Crossing Milbank Sound, the ship once more entered the fine waters of the Skeena. The last day, Thursday, broke gloriously fine, and in the morning the passengers assembled on the topmost deck. Here they tendered addresses, and Mr. Young, the manager of the excursion, and Captain Troup and Hughes, our trusty pilots, in which the utmost satisfaction was expressed on account of the trip, which, throughout, in all its details, was thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated. It was noted that 125 years ago Captain Dixon, in the Queen Charlotte, discovered and named Queen Charlotte Inlet, which marked a new era in the history of the north-west coast. In a sense, the initial trip of the Princess Charlotte, the queen of the Pacific