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FORT GEORGE: ITS AWAKENING

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Illustrations from photographs

IN the picturesque Fraser Valley of Central British Columbia, near where the hurtling waters of the pretty Nechaco River sweep majestically into the Fraser, there stands, and has stood for nearly a century, the trading-post Fort George. Here, for a space of time, the beginning of which antedates the childhood days of the oldest inhabitant of the valley, the *siwash*, with his *kloochman*, has bartered with the shrewd factors of that intrepid body of pioneer merchants The Honourable The Hudson's Bay Company, exchanging the pelts of the beaver, marten, otter, mink and kindred fur-bearing animals for blankets, trade-guns, steel traps, and those staple articles of food, flour, sugar and tea—so essential to the appeasing of the epicurean appetite of the modern Indian.

Here, less than a year prior to the time of writing, I witnessed the birth and development of the embryo town of Fort George—"A city in the making," so say its optimistic builders; and a brief study of existing conditions leads one to agree with them. A keen rivalry between the promoting interests, and an unwillingness to cooperate, have resulted in the placing on the market of two or three town-sites, each possessing the name "Fort

George," with prefixes "South" and "Central" as distinguishing features. However, there will undoubtedly be but one city at the junction of the Fraser and Nechaco Rivers when the transcontinental railroad, now building, is completed—and that the *united* Fort George. When speaking of Fort George, I therefore have reference to the united city at the confluence of these two beautiful rivers, the city that is rapidly becoming the commercial centre of the interior of Canada's Pacific Province.

"The Call of the Wild" and "The Lure of Gold," two incentives, which, when combined, amount to an almost uncontrollable passion in man, were sufficient reason for finding myself at the close of April leaving the bustling City of Vancouver on the "Limited" for Ashcroft, at which point connections were to be made with the stage for the Interior, accommodation having already been secured by wire. I had anticipated a ride of about two hundred miles in, or on, a typical Western stage, drawn by the customary four-horse team, but was agreeably surprised at being able to secure a seat in a fine new touring car, which was one of several machines being used experimentally to ascertain the possibility of transforming the