

Victoria City and the Island of Vancouver

A Rare Photographic View of James Bay, Showing Site of C.P.R. Empress Hotel as it Was Before the Magnificent Structure Was Erected

THROUGH the courtesy of Miss Emily Woods, of Pandora St., a highly esteemed and widely known pioneer resident of the city, the Colonist is enabled to reproduce today on this page a rare photographic view of the extreme eastern part of James Bay, as it appeared in 1870.

This picture is one of a series contained in a collection kindly placed at the disposal of the Colonist by Miss Woods, and some of these, which possess great historical value and interest will be published from week to week. Amongst the photographs, which by the way are a treasured heirloom of the family, are views of Esquimalt, Nanaimo, New Westminster, Burrard Inlet, and points in the interior of the province famous as the scenes of mining excitement in the early days. There are a half dozen or so very rare views of Victoria. The scene on Burrard Inlet possesses a special interest from the fact that it shows the site of the present magnificent city of Vancouver, which, at the period at which the photo was taken, was a dense forest.

The photograph which we publish today reveals a scene familiar to all the "old timers," but to the hundreds of newcomers it will possess a special interest as indicating the wonderful transformation which has taken place at the point where the imposing C.P.R. Empress hotel now stands. To very many who knew that section of James Bay as it was before the work of improvement was undertaken, the photograph, showing as it does the large body of water behind the bridge, which was torn down a few years ago to make way for the present massive granite wall, will bring a new realization of how great a change has been accomplished. On the high ground in the rear may be seen a large brick building which was erected by the members of the St. Andrew's Presbyterian church in 1860. It is still standing and is at present utilized by a printing establishment. Humboldt street, shown in the picture, was then a busy thoroughfare.

The publication during the past few weeks of matter appertaining to the early days in Victoria and Vancouver Island has aroused such widespread interest that today some further reference will be made to this fascinating theme, dealing now particularly with Hudson's Bay days.

When farmers came to Oregon the fur traders left the Columbia. Would they be able to hold Fort Victoria against another such peaceful invasion or would all the pains and expense they had spent upon it go for nothing? Some such thoughts must have been in the minds of Douglas, Finlayson and other of the Hudson's Bay company's servants on the Pacific coast soon after the Oregon treaty settled the question of disputed territory. As time went on their doubts and fears reached the directors of the company in London. The result was that in 1849 they obtained from the British government a grant of Vancouver Island for the purpose of forming a colony there. The company already held, not only the island but all the British territory west of the Rocky Mountains as a game preserve. Were these monopolists anxious that settlers should come to drive away the bear and the beaver? Their enemies said they were not, and most likely their enemies were right. But the Hudson's Bay people were shrewd business men. They saw that if colonists must come it would be to the company's advantage to have the management of the settlements and control of the settlers.

The British statesmen of that day thought perhaps that men who could conduct their own business as well as the Hudson's Bay company did would do better for British subjects, who should be so venturesome as to try to make homes for themselves on the western edge of England's dominions than any one whom they could send to rule there. They would allow the experiment to be tried for five years and if at the end of that time the company failed to establish a colony the grant could be revoked.

The price of land was fixed by the British government at £1 or about five dollars an acre, with the condition that any one who bought a hundred acres must bring out to settle upon it three families or six single men. The company reserved for its own use about ten square miles round Fort Victoria, and granted to the Puget Sound Agricultural company a large farm between Victoria and Esquimalt. These companies built mills, imported stock and brought laborers from the Old Country to till the land and tend their flocks and herds.

By this time there were quite a number of families at Fort Victoria and in many of the other forts young people were growing up in ignorance. A chaplain was sent out to hold religious services and to open a boarding school. This gentleman, the Rev. Robert Staines, and his wife, arrived in 1849. Mrs. Staines was an excellent teacher and an estimable lady, but if we are to believe the stories of the time, Mr. Staines was far more bent on making a fortune than on ministering to the spiritual needs of the people of Victoria. He soon quarreled with the company, and in 1855 set out for England to complain of its doings, but was drowned on the way.

When settlers began to come as they did soon, they found that they could get no land near the fort. The first settlement was made at Sooke, about twenty miles by sea from Victoria, by Captain Grant. This gentleman, with eight companions, arrived in 1849. He soon tired of the lonely and monotonous life

of a pioneer farmer, and sold his land to Michel Muir, whose descendants still occupy the old farm. Shortly after a gentleman named Cooper bought land at Metchosin, a few miles from the fort. In 1850 the bark Norman Morrison brought out eight immigrants, and in 1851 the Tory arrived with one hundred and twenty hired laborers. In 1853, the Norman Morrison came back with two hundred more colonists, who had promised to work for the company for five years, their wages to be paid

To show how jealous its officers were of the slightest interference with its monopoly the following incident is related: A Mr. Cooper who had formerly been a servant of the company, bought an iron vessel in England. It was sent out in sections, and on its arrival put together and sent to the mouth of the Fraser to get a cargo of cranberries and potatoes. The little ship was then sent to San Francisco and her load sold at a handsome profit. No one had ever thought before

to deliver up the criminals. Here, as elsewhere under the rule of the Hudson's Bay company, the natives were treated with kindness and sympathy and white men were not allowed to commit those outrages which have so often caused the slaughter of defenceless settlers.

Until 1853 there had been no law courts held in Vancouver Island. In that year, David Cameron, who had been superintendent of coal mines at Nanaimo, was appointed chief

in seeing the "Coal City" itself, before resuming the journey in our company. Our party complete, we again board the City of Nanaimo, which quickly passes Protection Island and leaves Departure Bay behind. Away across the Gulf we see the verdure-clad hills in the middle distance, whilst above them the snow-clad peaks of the Coast Range, on the mainland, rear their mighty heads. The good ship ploughs merrily through the waters of the Gulf until we see L'Asqueti, Texada, Hornby and Denman Islands in the distance. Gradually we reach the southern end of Denman, where, on a solitary rock, stands the picturesque Yellow Rock lighthouse, and as we pass up the channel leading to Union Bay, the dying rays of the summer sun impart a rosy tint to the peaks of the Beaufort Range and to the mighty glacier behind Comox Lake, on the topmost peak of which no man has ever yet set foot.

Union Bay

As we enter Union Bay itself we see steamers of all descriptions lying at anchor, awaiting the coal which is to take them to all parts of the earth. Union Bay is essentially a place of industry, having been established as a port some time after the discovery of coal at Cumberland, about twenty years ago. During the Klondike rush it burst into some prominence as the last port at which stores could be obtained before setting out for the then, comparatively unknown lands of the north. Here are situated the new machine shops of the Wellington Colliery Co., built since the acquisition of the Esquimalt & Nanaimo Railway Co. by the C. P. R., some time ago. Recently several large logging camps have started operations in the immediate neighborhood; and, withal, Union Bay's prosperity is great and her prospects of the rosiest description. Across the Bay we can catch a glimpse of Comox, to which the "City," as the steamer is locally known, will go on in the early hours of the morning; but we will leave the good ship here and reach it by another route.

Alongside the wharf the W. C. Co.'s train is awaiting, and half an hour or so takes us to Cumberland and, incidentally, to the mines from which a great part of the Dunsmuir millions has come.

Cumberland

The original settlement when the late Robert Dunsmuir, father of the Hon. James Dunsmuir, the present Lieutenant-governor of the province, located the coal here, about twenty years ago, was called Union, but the newer portion of the settlement has become an incorporated city under the name of Cumberland. Four large mines are in constant operation here, namely, Nos. 4, 5, 6 and 7. No. 6 is situated immediately outside the city limits just above the old "camp," while Nos. 5 and 7 are situated some distance to the north of the city. We, however, having special privileges will first thing in the morning board a coal train and go westward to the largest mine of all, No. 4, which is situated on the eastern shore of Comox Lake. We pass the extensive pithead works of the mine, with its mule stables, blacksmith shops, etc., and then a walk of fifty yards round the "dump" and the world of industry is forgotten in the wonderful vista that opens up before us. Comox Lake extends from about twelve miles to the westward, and on its eastern extremity spreads out into a narrow band running almost north and south, which at its northern end flows into the Courtenay river. Our time being limited, a gasoline launch is waiting to take us up the lake. We pass between ranges of mountains, that rise almost perpendicularly from the bosom of the lake, amidst scenes of unequalled beauty, and if our eyes be keen enough we may possibly discern upon the mountain side some of the larger game, such as deer or bears, with which the country abounds.

Back again to Cumberland, and after attending to material wants, we ride or drive through thickly-timbered country away to the north, until after six miles we pull up and look down upon the settlement of Courtenay, through which the river of the same name winds its way. But, before investigating it, we turn sharply to the left along the "Lake Trail," for here is something worth coming far to see. Two miles along, past many well-cleared ranches, we ride, until we come out upon a clearing where an old log cabin or two form a melancholy contrast to the more modern buildings in the neighborhood. As we strike into the bush on foot we are aware of a dull roar in the surrounding atmosphere. As we travel onwards, it becomes still louder, although there is no evidence of its cause, until we burst through a mass of brush and look down upon a warring mass of tumultuous waters. We descend the bluff by a precipitous trail and, taking up our position on a solitary rock by the shore, are lost in admiration of the scene before us. The run of the "tyee" salmon is on, and not a yard from our feet in the roaring flood a king of the river rises to test its strength against the forces of nature. Almost out of the river he rises until two-thirds of his body are clear of the water, his tail moving with the speed of the propeller of a mighty ocean liner as he stems the tremendous current, until he finally makes up his mind to try a mighty leap to reach the higher portion of the falls. He falls back defeated for the time being, only to have his place taken by another and yet another of his kind. On the far side of the falls there is a ladder to assist the salmon on their upward way, but the kingly salmon seems to despise the assistance of a kindly government, and claims his right to rule the river as he will. The sight of the "tyee" run at the falls is one a stranger will never forget, but time presses, and we must away.



A Rare Photographic View Showing Site of Empress Hotel as it Was in 1870.

Courtesy of Miss Emily Woods.

in land at the end of that time. The laborers were to receive twenty-five and the tradesmen fifty acres each. At the end of 1853 there were only 450 people on Vancouver Island, and only 40 acres of land, outside the company's farms, under cultivation. In those days there was no money in the colony. The colonist who had nothing to sell must bring it to the fort, and receive payment in goods at the company's prices.

In March, 1850, Governor Blanchard arrived from England to take charge of the colony of Vancouver Island. The summer before, Factor James Douglas, who with Ogden managed the affairs of the H. B. Co. in the Northwest, had taken charge of Fort Victoria. The directors of the company had proposed Douglas for governor, but the British government preferred to send out a man who was not connected with the company.

When Governor Blanchard arrived in March, 1850, he found there was nothing for him to do and no place for him to live. At first he accepted the hospitality of the officers of the fort and later a house and offices were built for him outside its walls. It was easier for the governor to find a dwelling than employment. The Hudson's Bay company were able to manage their own affairs, and would allow no outsider to interfere with them. Almost all the civilized inhabitants of the island were in their employ, and under their control. The very few independent settlers had not yet felt the need of a government. A few miners at Fort Rupert were inclined to be disorderly, but a policeman would have been of more service among them than a high-minded English gentleman. As for the Indians, they had their own laws and customs with which it did not do for a stranger to meddle.

Governor Blanchard took several trips round the coast in the government ship Driver, and did his best to fulfil his duty to Her Majesty. Strange to say the British ministry had not provided the governor with a salary and living at Fort Victoria was expensive. For about a year and a half he remained on the island and then resigned a position in which there was neither honor nor profit. He was succeeded in the autumn of 1851 by Douglas, who was appointed at a salary of £800 a year.

The colony, though so small was discontented. Land was dear and in many places hard to clear. The price of goods was very high. Though the produce from the company's farm was readily sold at Alaska, the Hawaiian Islands and latterly at San Francisco, the small farmer at a distance from the market, could only get such prices as the Victoria traders chose to give. The company would allow no one who did not belong to it to trade with the Indians.

of buying the cranberries, which grew plentifully in the delta of the Fraser. No sooner, however, did Governor Douglas hear of Cooper's enterprise than he sent orders to the factor at Langley to pay such a price for the fruit as would prevent the Indians selling to any one else and to buy all they brought to the fort. To add to their discontent the settlers on Vancouver Island heard of the great fortunes that were since 1849 being made in the goldfields of California. Not only the farm-

justice. To pay his salary a license was imposed on those who sold intoxicating liquors.

Although many complaints had been sent to England by the Vancouver Island colonists the authorities did not think them grave enough to call for the withdrawal of the grant of the islands to the Hudson's Bay company. In 1851 it was determined in spite of much opposition, to allow it to continue to try for another five years to establish a colony on Vancouver Island.

"THE GARDEN OF THE ISLAND"

Capt. R. Ross Napier, Comox, has written the following very interesting description of what has not been inaptly termed "The Garden of Vancouver Island."

It is but a few years since the writer came upon what Arnold would call

"Two worlds, one dead,
The other powerless to be born."

But that stage of peaceful transition between the days of the pioneer and the evening of the energetic industrial race of today has all but passed, as far as Comox is concerned, and the district is rapidly entering into the throes of being "discovered." But a few years ago it would have been a matter of some difficulty for a stranger in Vancouver or Victoria to discover by what means he might reach Comox, and but a few seeing the passengers board the S. S. Joan at Vancouver would have imagined that many of them were bound for Nanaimo en route for the place where, according to a recent somewhat hyperbolic writer, "the original Garden of Eden was situated." The writer cannot be tempted into any controversy as to the authenticity of this statement, but the fact remains that Comox district, from its situation and manifold beauties, might well have been chosen as the cradle of the race.

Let us accompany the prospective visitor from either Vancouver or Victoria up the east coast to about the centre of Vancouver Island, to where this fairland lies. From Vancouver the C. P. R. S.S. Joan leaves for Nanaimo daily, and arrived there, we will leave our visitor for a moment until our friend from Victoria arrives, when we may resume our journey together. Early on Tuesday morning of each week the S.S. City of Nanaimo leaves the capital and wends her way through the beautiful islands of the Gulf of Georgia to Nanaimo, but, if time is a consideration, and our Victoria friend conscientiously disapproves of early rising, or does not care to spend the previous night on the steamer, he may take the E. & N. Railway-Company's train, which leaves at a more seemly hour, for the same destination, and thus will have considerable time to spend

THE SALMON RUN

Vague space, and in the hush Dawn's pencil drew
On the damp clouds of darkness, line by line,
Peaks and vast headlands, and a fresh wind blew
Sharp with the stinging kisses of the brine,
Pungent with perfume of the sunburnt pine.
Through drifting veils of filmy forest smoke
Filtered the rose-pink sunrise of the day.
The sea plains heaved; the tide-rip laughing woke;
Beyond the sun-limned circle of the bay
Ocean a palpitating opal lay.
Milk-white, mysterious, throbbing fairy fire
Coursed through its veils and all the madcap throng
Which cradles in the tide-rip, ocean's choir,
In stoles of roughened silver, deep-voiced, strong,
Danced as it sang the young tide's meeting song.
Working the sea to madness, sudden waves
Roared by the cliffs, fretted the canopies
Written with runes, and echoed in the caves.
There was no wind to swing the slender trees
And yet through fields of calm ran racing seas.
Strange eddies came and went. The black-toothed rocks
Were whelmed in waters piled upon an heap.
Louder and louder grew the thunder shocks
Of the tempestuous rip. Beyond, the Deep
Lay calm and smiling, mother-like, asleep.
Then fell a miracle. The waters knew
Some deep sea-call, and their swift tides became
Incarnate, and sudden incarnate grew
Their shifting lights. A gleam and azure flame
Drove through the Deep. The salmon pilgrims came.
A foredoomed pilgrimage from depths profound
To grey Alaskan waters, turbid, pent,
In midwinded pines, where neither sun nor sound
Or ocean's song can reach—the last event
To rot on glacial mud, frayed, leprous, spent.
Clive Phillips-Wolley, in London Spectator.

ers but the coal miners and the servants of the company itself left the island for the Sacramento.

The Indians, thanks to Governor Douglas, had given little trouble. A force of mounted men had been formed by the settlers and the servants of the company. There was generally an armed ship at Esquimalt, often several. When the savages committed a crime, Douglas, by a display of force, induced the Indians

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