

TRIBES GATHERING AT BIG POTLATCH

CELEBRATION BEING HELD AT FORT RUPERT

Provincial Constable Tells of Baneful Influences on Indian Life—Quatsino News.

The Indian potlatch with all its ancient ceremonial is not a thing of the past. The barbarous customs of old are still practiced, and that, too, within a few days' sail from Victoria. The Indians congregate in large numbers; they borrow all the money and procure all the blankets possible at a rate of interest beyond all reason; they abandon all pursuits of labor and revel in the weird festivities so revolting to civilization.

A potlatch is now in progress at Fort Rupert, Quatsino Sound. Of this Constable E. W. Leeson gives an interesting description. He arrived on the noon train from Nanaimo on Wednesday, having brought to that city a prisoner named J. Costello, who had been in six months' hard labor for supplying intoxicants to Indians. The constable and his prisoner tramped over the trail from Quatsino to Hardy Bay. Three feet of snow lay on the ground, and it took the party eight hours to walk ten miles. The journey was a most arduous one, and emphasizes the necessity, Mr. Leeson thinks, of a constant Indian agent. Hardy Bay, William Hunt's strop was secured, and the party started from Alert Bay, where the prisoner was to be given a hearing before the Indian agent. As Fort Rupert the strop was torn down for two days. With many new enterprises starting up at Quatsino Mr. Leeson is of opinion that there should be no occasion for such a difficult journey.

In regard to the potlatch Mr. Leeson says:

"There has been a great reunion of natives at Fort Rupert, the gathering being the largest seen at that point for years. It looks like the old Hudson Bay days. Nine tribes are to be represented—the Fla-wa-tash, Turner Island; Ach-wa-mess, Westman Sound; Gua-wa-he-no, Wells Pass; Man-a-li-la-kwa, Village Island; Tsar-wa-to-no, Kingcombe Island; Mac-tal-pat, Turner Island; Pe-nock-ta, Harbledon Island; Nip-kish, Alert Bay; Cla-la-se-qua, Hope Island; The Noo-wa-tas, Cape Mudge, and Kos-komess have yet to arrive.

"The wild orgies of the Ha-matse ceremony were in progress during my stay at Fort Rupert.

"Three different Ha-matse were racing about the ranch at night. Ha-matse is a naked slave from the woods, with four or five others partially dressed to hold him in check. They race at full speed about the place and in and out of the homes. They carry native whistles and make an unearthly noise as they go about. There was no actual biting done, possibly to my presence. It was evident the old-time spirit was moving as strongly as ever. The poor missionary at Fort Rupert is a back number for the time being.

"The absurdity of the contention that there is no harm in the potlatch is well demonstrated. It has brought all these natives together and among them are a number of ambitious young chiefs who borrow at 100 per cent. all the money and blankets they can get. The return of two for one is the Indian 'uncle'—it means that the essence of the potlatch is favoritism. Instead of giving to the poor, the spoils are handed over in large amounts to other chiefs. The wealth accumulated is converted into copper called 'kwa-qua.' These range in size, some as large as four feet in length, 18 inches wide, and a quarter of an inch thick. They are beat into a peculiar shape with an oval figure carved upon the face. Each has a name. The 'kwa-qua' has its value, from \$100 to \$10,000 each. There are about five of ancient origin that are worth probably \$40,000, according to Indian valuation.

"The potlatch is the real cause of the slow advancement of these tribes. People, including missionaries, knowing 'them' fully realize this, but the general public and the government do not.

"The young Indian wants to become a chief. He saves all his earnings, and saves along with his old shack; appearance and comforts do not appeal to him, and good clothes and a nice home don't make him a chief in the eyes of his tribe. He finally gets enough to give a potlatch or becomes possessed of one of these copper gods. His friends then gather around, sing a great song, Ha-matse appears for his benefit, and he is recognized a chief. Perhaps he is given the name of some ancient warrior; possibly he may have one pair of pants, but such apparel is a small consideration.

"It is a pity the Canadian government, through the Indian department, cannot take a hand with the people that are endeavoring to better the condition of the natives. The simplest way would be to buy at the Indians' value the few largest kwa-qua left. Deprived of these and with a strict enforcement of the law there need be no potlatch. This would accomplish more in one year than the missions and industrial schools do in twenty-five, and at less expense in the end. The buying of the few large kwa-qua would put the leaders of the tribes out of business, and render the task of stopping a future potlatch easy, as there would be no large interests involved. The gathering of many in one house and the camping of others on the beach as at present at Fort Rupert tends to demoralize them.

"Mr. Leeson was shown specimens of composition, drawing, etc., done at the industrial school, Alert Bay, that would do credit to any white child. The teacher, Mr. Corke, is a native. The question of the children's ability to acquire an education. The only trouble is to get their attendance, the potlatch being the primary cause. The teacher mentioned a case in point. He has at present three young men learning trades;

one in particular is becoming an engineer. They have all gone to the potlatch at Fort Rupert, where the engineer will undoubtedly come under influences. Through envy of others, etc., he may borrow all he can to give a potlatch to gain a certain standing in his tribe, and put in the remainder of his life striving to hold that position and paying his debts, according to Indian custom. The education he has acquired and the engineering will be gradually given up under this pressure, and he will return to the level of his older tribesmen. Mr. Leeson says the local Indian agent, Mr. De Beck, understands the conditions thoroughly, and is fully aware of the baneful results of these large gatherings. He would disperse them and send them back to their own ranches if the authorities would sustain him in doing so. One old resident in the district has studied the natives for years, and claims the conditions have reached such a crisis now that if four or five chiefs were taken out of the gathering and given six months' jail, the celebration would cease to exist. The same man says that many of the younger generation would welcome the step.

Mr. Leeson reports that the necessary \$200,000 for pulp mill development has been raised, and a saw mill will soon be installed. West Houston and party are expected at Quatsino any day to decide on a site and to start men to work.

A Colorado expert with Mr. Holcomb arrived at Quatsino on the last steamer to look at the June group. Snow, however, lies nearly three feet on the June summit, something unknown for years at that end of the island.

PERMANENT ORGANIZATION.

Vancouver Branch of Provincial Mining Association Elects Officers For the Year.

The Vancouver branch of the Provincial Mining Association has been reorganized and permanent officers elected. The News-Advertiser in referring to the meeting says: "The Vancouver branch of the Provincial Mining Association was put upon a permanent footing at the largely attended meeting held on Wednesday evening. The branch was reorganized at a meeting held just previous to the provincial convention, with provisional officers, and on Wednesday evening a permanent board was elected. The meeting was very representative. Colin F. Jackson, provisional president, was in the chair, and in his introductory remarks briefly referred to the recent convention held in Victoria as demonstrating that the Provincial Mining Association had come to stay and would do a great deal of good work."

The following officers were appointed: President, C. F. Jackson; first vice-president, C. W. McQueen; second vice-president, J. Findley; secretaries, Messrs. George Sheldon-Williams and J. Smith; treasurer, Campbell Sweney; executive committee, H. T. Lockyer, W. H. Malkin, E. P. Gihman, W. D. Hayward, Charles L. George, A. Walker, R. P. McLennan, J. Y. McAdam, W. D. Yess, E. O'Sullivan, F. E. Woodside and Frank Richards.

Enthusiastic addresses were delivered by several who were present upon the mining resources of the province, and particularly those parts tributary to Vancouver city.

NORTHERN SUICIDE.

Man Found Frozen Stiff With Revolver in Hand—Wolves Appear on Trail.

A Dawson dispatch says: "The body of a suicide, frozen as solid as marble, clenching in his icy hand the revolver with which he killed himself, has been found near Fort Yess. The weapon with which he committed the act was held so tightly in the hand that it could not be recovered without destroying the hand, so man and gun were buried beneath the snow just as found. His name and past life are unknown."

The upper Stewart canyon, according to advices from that region, is alive with timber wolves this winter. They roam in bands of scores in the more remote parts of the country. Near Fraser Falls as many as 100 in a single pack have been seen. This side of Fraser Falls and in the Dawson district they are numerous, and often follow travellers, but not in such great numbers. Several traders on the Dawson-Duncan trail have encountered wolves of late, and had strange experiences with them.

The steamer Lightning, at Washington creek, below Eagle, may be crushed in this spring at the time of the break-up, unless extricated during the winter and placed on the bank. She has a heavy list and is against a deep-cut bank. The Lightning belongs to Tom O'Brien and others of Dawson.

It is reported that four or five steamers and several scows are between Eagle and Fort Yukon laden with freight for Dawson, and all the freight on these vessels is such that is non-perishable.

ENJOYABLE SOCIAL.

Given at Work Point—Guests Were Royally Entertained.

As briefly mentioned in the Times Thursday night, the warrant officers, staff-sergeants and sergeant club gave their third social on Wednesday evening last in the Fives Court, Work Point Barracks. The proceedings were graced by the presence of numerous lady friends of the club from Victoria and elsewhere, and military friends from the Fifth Regiment also were well represented.

Games, shooting, etc., were provided in one portion of the hall, the remainder of the floor being allotted for the use of the devotees of the light fantastic, the music being rendered by the band of the Bantley combination. During the evening Sergeants Whiting and Turner obliged with songs, and whilst refreshments were being served friends from the Navy were well represented by some comic sketches.

The enjoyable evening was brought to a close with "God Save the King."

The club trust that their many friends will again honor them with their presence on the evening of the next social, invitations for which will be issued in due course.

THE ICEMAN'S TROUBLES.

"My business," says John Gray, ice dealer of Wingham, Ont., "is one of the most fertile fields under the sun for sowing the seeds of rheumatic suffering. For five years I was a great invalid, woe cannot convey the faintest idea of my intense suffering and constant pain I endured. 6 bottles of South American Rheumatic Cure permanently cured me." Sold by Jackson & Co. and Hall & Co.—146.

KILLED IN ATTACK ON PORT ARTHUR

RESULTS OF ATTACK BY THE JAP SHIPS

Conditions Which Prevailed at Vladivostok When War Broke Out—Bank Subscriptions.

Mail advices received by the steamer Olympia from the Orient yesterday contain the following details of the early attacks made upon Port Arthur.

A Chefoo telegram published in Japanese papers states that as the result of the Port Arthur engagement on February 9th, over thirty Russian troops and more than one hundred and twenty Chinese coolies were killed, and many others were wounded. Many houses on the coast near the entrance to the harbor were destroyed. Owing to insufficient hospital accommodation, a miserable scene prevailed. Steamship service to Port Arthur has been entirely suspended since February 10th. Russia has been accelerating the repairs to the damaged war vessels, but it is difficult to execute the task.

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REGISTRATION OF ELECTORS.

The Lists Close One Week From Monday for Applicants.

According to the Provincial Elections Act all persons desirous of having their names entered on the list of voters shall make application to the registrar of voters up to the last Monday in March and September of each year. On the first Monday of May and November a court of revision is held by the registrar for the purpose of hearing any objections to any names on the list or to the applicants who may wish to have their names removed from the list.

Those whose names are not now on the voters' lists must have them registered before one week from Monday with Harvey Coomb, the registrar of voters. The provincial lists are also used for Dominion election purposes.

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The letter then reviews the concessions secured for the workers since 1897, including 75 per cent. increase in wages, and continues:

"It is conceded on all sides that the apex of industrial activity has been reached, and we are slowly moving towards an industrial depression. The operators came into the joint convention asking for a reduction of wages of 15 per cent. and the proposition was opposed by us with all the information and all the skill at our command. As an ultimatum from which they could not be moved they offered us a reduction from the present scale of prices of 5.55 per cent. We know how hard it is to be compelled to accept a reduction in wages, but it is better to accept a slight reduction now than to have our organization intact ready to take advantage of any future movement than to bring on a disastrous strike."

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That the celebrated "Gilt Edge" Shirts, manufactured only by the firm of J. Piercy & Co., cannot be excelled. Once used, always used. Use no other.

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Purchasers and Smelters of Copper, Gold and Silver Ores.

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Convenient to E. & N. Ry. or the sea.

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CHEMIST,
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'PHONES 425 and 450.

Breeders, Attention!

The Dairyman's and Live Stock Association have again elected me as their secretary, and I have been instructed to arrange for a shipment of Breeding Stock from the Eastern Provinces, and I am now prepared to quote you prices, and give such other information that will insure getting good results at a great saving being able to charter vessels.

News has been received of a report that a war correspondent, Mr. McKenzie, representative of the Daily Mail in Korea, had been killed in a fall from a post.

May Fall Back

Lin Kow, March 14.—The authorities are apparently not so anxious to receive inquiries of the foreign gunboats regarding the blockade of the Liao river as they were a few days ago, however, a disposition of guns has been made and a defence plan has been arranged. The arrival of Gettysburg, which a few days ago, however, caused the abandonment of the original intention.

The information obtained from Arthur and Newchwang is that the government's intention is to definitely until it can complete a force of 300,000 troops, and to oppose the Chinese. The Japanese authorities are satisfied that

DECLARED INSANE.

Woman Declared She Has Received Command to Kill Her Children.

Bangor, Me., March 10.—Maniacal proceedings are reported among the five hundred members of a so-called religious sect living in a colony on Bear's island, near Jonesport. One woman, who tried to kill her children after announcing a revival that God had ordered her to make the sacrifice, has been adjudged insane and brought to the hospital here. Jonesport deputy sheriffs and citizens have gone to the island to calm the excitement.

Persons just returned from the scene assert that during the revival the woman who was brought to the hospital called out that the voice of God had told her that a certain dog must be killed. The animal was brought into the meeting house and slaughtered. Then she announced that she had received divine command that a cat in the village should be put out of the world. The execution was carried out, but when she arose a third time and declared she had been commanded to slay her baby a furious discussion was precipitated which broke up the meeting.

The authorities heard of the affair and seized the woman before she could carry out the "command." The islanders are now destroying their watches, jewelry and other articles of ornament.

Mortgage Sale

Under and by virtue of the powers contained in a certain indenture of Mortgage bearing date the 26th day of June, 1894, and duly registered at the Land Registry Office, Victoria, in Charge Book Volume 13, folio 97, No. 16,385B, tenders will be received at the office of the undersigned, 2400 Broadway, Victoria, B. C., until noon of the 15th day of March, 1904, for the purchase of the following property, viz: the east 70 acres of section 7 and the east 40 acres of section 8, range V1, Quamichan district, British Columbia, containing 100 acres, more or less, situate in the southeast corner of section 7, range V, county of one Walter Pook's 1st concession in the Land Registry Office, Victoria, in Absolute Fees Book, volume 14, folio 85, No. 15,727.

The mortgage does not bind himself to accept any tender.

Dated 11th February, 1904.

FELL & GREGORY,

WANTED—Competent working house-keeper, with long experience, desirable position. Address *Box 100, Victoria, B. C.*

WANTED—We have continental inquiries for Vancouver Island farm lands. If your property is for sale write us at once, giving full particulars, and we will sell for you if it can be sold. Heisterman & Co., Victoria, B. C.

STRAWBERRY PLANTS—Magoon, Improved Sharpless, Royal Sovereign, Gladstone, and twenty other varieties. Write for free descriptive price list. Tanner Bros., 2222 Broadway, Strawberry Farm, Young's P. O., South Saanich.

Got a Constant Headache?

Then chances to one the secret of your suffering is that "white man's burden." Catarrh. Here's a sentence from one man's evidence for Dr. Agnew's Catarrhal Powder—"One application gave me instant relief, cleared the nasal passages and stopped the pain in my head." It's a quick, safe and sure treatment, and it never fails to cure. 50 cents. Sold by Jackson & Co. and Hall & Co.—146.

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