

per and fish—both war commodities.

For all emergencies there is a good-sized hospital. Here lumberjacks, meeting with an accident in felling or handling the giant trees and timber which in ships is helping to set at nought submarines and give to Canada a mercantile marine, are brought for medical treatment and care.

Alert Bay on account of its situation is a meeting-place for all sorts of interesting people. There is only one hotel and that, picturesquely enough, is the old Mission-house, which with its huge timbered ceilings and tales of early days and Indians would fill a book. Here over the crackling fire roaring in the great chimney-place "trail-beaters" for the woods, mines or fisheries succeed each other in endless procession, yarning of experiences, as they wait for steamer "up" or "down". Canadian history in the making. Yarns that are world-history, too. For men from this "company—from the hinterlands" of British Columbia and Alaska who sat here by the fire often enough in the old days are now "somewhere over there", and these comrades staying behind, with every stroke of the axe and load of shovel are keeping open "the lines of communications".

Truly the currents and cross-currents, as well as undercurrents, of life here are fast finding out, and that is what lends atmosphere to this niche in the coast. If it lacked these mysterious happenings and these out-of-the-ordinary people, it would have no more charm than dozens of other places one could name. Life never is dull here, where action is the keynote and where extremes are always meeting. Alert Bay is an outpost truly Canadian, truly British. Therefore one is not surprised here on stepping into the rectory drawing-room to come upon a bit of our social life at its best. The rector's wife pouring tea for several of the teachers—the doctor who has dropped in from the hospital, a visiting minister and wife from the mainland, the cannery

operator's bride, etc. Over the tea-cups the usual interesting talk, and then one by one a knitter takes her needles in hand and we sit around the fire talking war and victory bonds.

A visit to the Indian agent's attractive home, redolent of cosy comfort, produces an equally good cup of tea and reminiscences of interest connected with the Indians for the past quarter of a century.

At the Mission-house there's the scholarly old Scotsman of the clan MacLean and his wife "Becky", always ready with a story and tea, and making a real home at the old mission for the men who are carving Canada's fortunes out of the northern wilderness. Indeed, you may sip your five o'clock tea in as cosy and homelike drawing-rooms and from as delicate china in Alert Bay as anywhere in Canada; which, considering its remoteness, speaks well for those who are *holding* this "outpost" of the red men with totem pedigrees! The Indians need and deserve a high standard. With their "family" they have an idea of what's what, and who's who. No one stands more on his "dignity" than the Indian! One Sunday afternoon we were received by the present "chief" and his wife. They live in a neat cottage, furnished with chairs, tables and rugs and having family portraits on the walls. At our request the chief donned his handsome "court" coat, covered with symbols of great snakes, bears and eagles wrought in bead. Courteously he explained the significance of each emblem. He also brought out a handsomely carved "speech-pole", taller than himself, and showed with pride the "copper", which is the most important emblem of office. For the "copper" he paid five hundred dollars.

The chief speaks very good English, is a pillar in the church, and enjoys a potlatch. In other words, he is a man of parts.

The potlatch is a "giving-away" feast among the Indians. Wishing to impress the tribes with the importance of himself and family, some