

Own a piece of Canada

By ALAN FOTHERINGHAM
Vancouver Sun

You come upon the most interesting reading in the fine print of that official government noticeboard, the B.C. Gazette. How about this, under the land lease section: Take Notice that Billy Underwood, a mail carrier from Vinita, Oklahoma, is applying for a lease on 640 acres of B.C. land. Or this: Anita Allaire, a keypunch supervisor from Seattle, has picked out 1-1/2 acres on a lake. Ronald Leighty, a warehouse clerk from Troy, Montana, has found a lakeside property. Phebe LaTurner, a Spokane housewife, has discovered her spot for a summer lake cottage.

We all know about the wealthy American doctors and tycoons and retired movie stars who have grabbed their prime little piece of Canadian vacation land. But it's a measure of the Yankee stampede to B.C. that now mailmen from Oklahoma, clerks from Montana and keypunch girls from Seattle are grabbing waterfront land. This indeed is democracy.

Beauty spots

You could go on indefinitely with the examples. The Gulf Islands out in the Strait of Georgia are one of the beauty spots of the world, with the mildest climate in Canada. There is little Parker Island, owned by a New York grandmother who wants to keep it for her grandchildren. Wise Island was picked off recently by Seattle interests for \$250,000. There is a book written by a New York model and friend on how they bought Wallace Island.

An American real estate man explains, "The romance of owning a whole island is beginning to spread." There's the Portland doctor who bought a tiny island for \$25,000, but also bought up the waterfront rights so no one could even dock there.

The dozing B.C. government has

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The American public answers the call

finally been roused by an Oregon speculator, a charming fellow by the name of William J. Wineberg. He recently boasted that he has acquired more than 600 parcels of undeveloped B.C. land for resale — a little empire totalling 60,000 acres. Most of it he got for \$10 or less an acre. How? Simple, he explains. He keeps track of all B.C. property going on the block at auctions to recover unpaid taxes. He maintains an office in Victoria

Victoria to cancel this year's tax sale of property until it has time to prepare legislation to balk future Mr. Winebergs. The government is trying to pressure municipalities to do the same.

A number of wealthy Americans picked up real estate here around 1958 as a tax dodge. At that time U.S. death duties on Canadian real estate were a flat 15 per cent. In some families, duty on similar property in the U.S. was as high as

few dry acres of water-poor California for \$3,200,000. For that price in B.C. he can be an absentee cattle baron — owning land that has a half-dozen little lakes and streams.

Help from their friends

And then there's the help we get from our friends. Block Bros., largest real estate company in B.C., last year blossomed forth with huge ads in San Francisco papers: "British Columbia for Sale." To help buyers along, the company put out a glossy book with pictures and details on hundreds of choice B.C. properties. The resulting scream from irate British Columbians killed the ads, but the melody lingers on.

The problem is that the British Columbians have been so smug with the fact that wilderness is so close, so accessible. This of course is Paradise out here and now

others are beginning to believe our propaganda. We used to joke: 'Help keep B.C. Green — Bring Money.' Now we want the government to halt the joke.

For one thing, it doesn't even know the extent of the problem. The DBS, which measures and records most aspects of Canadian life, draws a blank on foreign ownership of land. There is no master registration of land sales, no central file on the disposition of Crown lands.

MP David Anderson, whose riding covers the Gulf Islands, urges that residents there be allowed to sell their land only to the government before "irresponsible developers do irreparable harm."

If the government doesn't do something quickly, B.C. will become what some critics already call it: British California.

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W.A.C. Bennett

to do his research and took the precaution of employing a former lands department man to help him. He boasts of islands he has bought for \$400 and sold for \$40,000. Practically all his sales naturally, are to other Americans.

Mr. Wineberg says quite cheerfully that Canadians have been "too dumb to invest in their own country." He's right, of course, but the word applies both to the cautious public and to a provincial government that has been asleep. Wineberg's embarrassing success has forced

85 per cent. The Kennedy administration plugged that tax loophole.

Then there is the matter of B.C. ranchland. By 1963, Americans already owned more than half the cattle ranches in B.C. "When you get down to it," says an Interior real estate man, "the Americans own the Cariboo."

The Gang Ranch in the Cariboo, largest cattle spread in North America was sold to Americans for \$750,000. A wealthy American surgeon may be able to pick up a

FACE TO FACE



Dr. George Tatham

By ALAN SHEFMAN

"Set the students on fire." With a philosophy of education that stems from that phrase, Dr. George Tatham, the Master of McLaughlin College attempts to deal with his students. At 63 years of age and a teacher of geography for forty years, Dr. Tatham is an amazing physical specimen. As far as he's concerned "all your edge goes off life if you're not fit."

Everyday without fail he takes part in some form of physical exercise. Either running, playing squash or going through one of the most incredible series of exercises imaginable. (The interviewer, being rather foolhardy, decided to attempt these exercises, and fainted with incredulity as he watched Dr. Tatham do situps, while hanging upside down!)

If he has any major disappointment in the ten years he has been at York (he was one of the original fifteen faculty) it is the fact that the great pressure of mass education hasn't allowed the university to grow at a slower pace to allow a more humanistic environment. But he also sees many fine things here. One of them that he considers most important is a committed faculty working to their fullest at the undergraduate level. Another, concerning the quality of the students he has dealt with, is summed up when he says, "with only one exception I've never had a lie told to me since I've been at York."

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