

**TOUR No. 17. Canadian Highway: Victoria to the Albernis, Sproatt and Great Central Lakes, via the Malahat Drive, Cowichan Valley, Nanaimo, Cameron Lake, Parksville and Mount Arrowsmith: 331.2 Miles.**

The first and most frequently travelled of Vancouver Island's two "Grand Tours" over magnificent scenic driveways crowded with interest and variety: Leaving Victoria via the Gorge Road, Craigflower and Colwood, the Island Highway is followed, through Nanaimo, to Parksville. (See Tour No. 19.) McBride Junction is passed, whence the extension of the E. & N. R. leads northerly to an ultimate terminal in Strathcona Park or beyond. Passing through virgin and beautiful forest country wherein development has merely scratched the fringes of the railway and public road, the interesting Salvation Army Colony of Coombs is passed at Mile 28.4 out of Nanaimo, and at Mile 31.5 the approach to Cameron Lake is begun, the road being largely carved out of the overhanging cliffs which frown down upon this deep and placid water—a giant sapphire set in the jade of fir-clad enclosing hills. The lake is dominated by lordly Mount Arrowsmith, crowned with perpetual snow, excellent trails leading to the summit from the pretty chalet which the C.P.R. has here provided for the discriminating pleasure hunter. Passing Cameron Lake the road traverses the great cathedral aisles of a magnificent big tree section, beyond which a practically continuous ascent marks the approach to Alberni. To reach New or Port Alberni one passes through the older community, both being pretty villages, in deadly rivalry, invested by incorporation with the status of cities. Both, also, are interesting, while the Somass River, the near-at-hand large reservations of the Opetchi-siht and Seshart Indian nations, Stamp River Falls, etc., are local institutions well repaying attention. From Alberni—the Pacific terminus of the Canadian Highway—an excellent forest road leads northerly along the river to Sproatt Lake, a favourite summer resort of Vancouver's well-to-do, about

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