

## "SOME EXPERIENCES IN PIONEER DAYS"

BY THE HON. DR. HELMCKEN

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"Fifty years experience in Practice," formed the subject of an address delivered before the Medical Association convention by Hon. J. S. Helmcken, now 82 years of age, who came to Victoria when the city was a Hudson Bay fort as surgeon to the company of Gentlemen Adventurers Trading to the Hudson Bay. The address was the feature of the session.

Dr. Helmcken, who was introduced by Dr. R. L. Fraser, the president, as the nestor of medicine in British Columbia, said he was asked to crowd the experiences of his fifty years and more of practice into fifteen minutes, and he considered that this was going even further than the tinctures of modern medicine where much was crowded in a small space. His experience had been the same as that of other medical men; some patients had recovered, some had died; some had done neither one nor the other.

He had been asked if he had seen operations without the use of chloroform. He had, and some severe ones, such as the removal of an arm or leg, practically without preparation. In the hospitals of those pioneer days they did not keep a great number of instruments. When an operation was to be performed they sent to the instrument maker and he brought what instruments were needed. There was little bother about bacteria then. The instruments were used as they were brought, and surgeons did not always prepare themselves as now; sometimes they had clothing bloody from other operations. He recalled that those operated upon bore themselves with astonishing fortitude. What bothered the surgeons of those days most were the ligatures. They were afraid to touch them for ten or fourteen days when they were supposed to have separated from the arteries. He had been told of a practi-