

Two Pictures and Two Impressions

By STEPHEN WENTWORTH

THE sun in all its dazzling splendor had just arisen as I awoke from a peaceful night's rest. Its piercing rays still tinged with the crimson morning hue were making vain attempts to melt the sparkling snow and ice crystals on the Coast Range mountains which were greeting me from across the bay. Tier after tier of blue, purple and brown mountains, each with its immaculate snow-cap, festooned here and there with fleecy gauze-like clouds in all the exquisite combination of delicate shades possible to the imagination were slowly disappearing in the valley below.

At the base of these sentinels of untold ages stretched the bay, a magnificent expanse of salt water which enjoys the reputation of being one of the most perfect harbors in the world.

From this picture of nature's regal pomp I turned to view what man had accomplished. There were wharves alive with people all on the move, everything denoting activity, ships from all parts of the known world loading and unloading, shrill ferry boat whistles seeming to complain of the congested conditions and asking for more room. Away from this scene of activity came wagons heavily laden to stop before massive structures for the purpose of unloading their wares, and in most instances to return from whence they came with another capacity load. The factories, too, appeared to be asking for recognition in this great commercial medley. They wanted to show the diversity of their industry, which pages would not do justice to—and now for the last and most important indication of genuine prosperity—the home—in this I doubt if there is another city on the North American continent which possesses as many desirable dwellings and comfortable homes as Vancouver. Each home, according to its locality, is characterized by stability, thrift and enterprise.

The second impression supplanted the first. The one was an impression of beauty. In the other beauty was combined with achievement. The whole picture imparted a sense of largeness. It seemed that the artist had laid down his brush before he was done—there was everywhere so much room for more buildings, for more wharves, for more wide streets, for more smokestacks, for more stone dwellings and stained bungalows. And yet in the narrow area of 8 square miles lay this great city, greater than many cities that spread over ten times as many more miles, greater in achievement, greater in promise! My mind painted a picture of the Greater Vancouver of tomorrow—the same clearly defined picture that rises before every mind that drinks in the full significance of Vancouver's rapid advance from a city of 1,000 to a city of 115,000 persons—the picture that was formed in Lord Northcliffe's mind when he said:

"I never saw a city in which a great future was so plainly written in the present."

Then I heard the story of Vancouver—a dramatic story of uninterrupted achievement.

Cities have been built around industries; cities have grown up because they happened to lie in the path of travel, because railroads came along and gave them people; cities have grown to greatness because of their geographical position, because of their exceptional harbor facilities or because, in marking out their transcontinental paths, the railroads have crossed at the same place and there have put down a city. It is seldom that all these universal causes for city growth contribute to the upbuilding of a single city, and yet in the story of Vancouver they appear one after the other.

There came to Vancouver first the fishing and lumber industries, bringing their quota of people; then came the railroads, looking for a Pacific-Canadian outlet; then came the trans-Pacific ships in search of an ideal and perfectly sheltered harbor. With the coming of the railroads and the ships, the knowledge of the presence at Vancouver of remarkable harbor facilities, of tremendous water power resources and of the possession of rich, raw materials of manufacture and of wide-stretching fertile lands, passed around the world. Then came the people to use all these many and varied resources. The people had to have places in which to work and houses in which to live. And thus was the city built by all the natural laws that lead up to city building, and not by boomers with lands to sell, nor by claim stakers with script to offer.

Twenty-five years ago Vancouver was a struggling fishing hamlet, a village of scattering huts, with less than five hundred inhabitants, with no hope for the future, and with its few industries gradually drifting away because it was so little known and so far from the beaten track of commerce and the end of railroads. But there were keen-brained, far-sighted, sagacious men behind the project to build the Canadian Pacific Railway, and they recognized in the tranquil little village an ideal site for the terminal of the great trans-continental artery of trade they proposed to build. Their decision to make Vancouver the western terminal was heralded to the world, and with the announcement began the influx of people. In 1886 Vancouver was incorporated as a city.

To tell the story of Vancouver's growth in the simple table of figures is to point out merely a natural result of the possession of all the fundamental requirements of a new city. Briefly these five lines of type tell in a simple way the dramatic story of Vancouver:

YEAR	POPULATION
1886	1,000
1891, (Dominion Government Census)	13,685
1901, (Dominion Government Census)	26,133
1909 (City Assessment Commissioner)	78,900
1910 (admitted to be a conservative estimate) ..	115,000

Except to minds accustomed to taking a mental measure of the rapidly increasing vastness of the North-West or used to adding each year several naughts to the string of figures that represent the superlative of the year before, the figures presented in the foregoing table would appear to be unbelievable.

Since the beginning of 1906 the population has increased on an average of one thousand a month. The actual city limits already have been over-reached in every direction by the demand of residential sites, and the fact that nowhere the "for rent" sign is displayed, and that all over are newly shingle roofs tells a story of prosperity that is unsurpassed. At the rate that the city is now growing, it will not be many years before it occupies the entire peninsula between the Fraser River and Burrard Inlet, while across the bay at the north, another city is carefully spreading out into the forest—North Vancouver—where, at the rate it is now growing will reach to the foot of the mountains before the end of two years.

A superficial study of Vancouver and the country lying around it offer the first explanation of the causes of its phenomenal growth. Deeper investigation destroys every