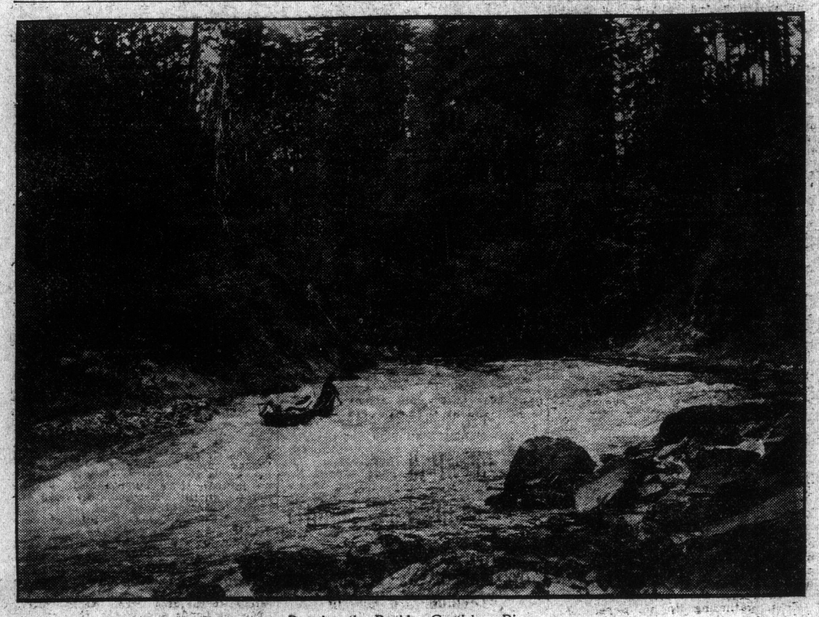
Charming Summer Resorts Near Victoria

Unsurpassed Facilities for Outdoor Pleasure at Innumerable Points Closely Adjacent to This City—Some of the Most Popular Places and How They Are Reached

Victoria's suburban resorts are amongst her chief attractions. To the tourist on a first visit the picture presented by the city, nestling amid scenery the natural beauty of which would be impossible to excel, creates an indelible impression. But his pleasure, especially if he be of an artistic temperament, is accentuated after spending a few days here. Naturally he takes the tally-ho ride and his eyes are opened. He sees the many pretty spots which surround British Columbia's capital/ Beacon Hill park, the Dallas road beach, Foul Bay, Shoal Bay, Ross Bay and Oak Bay—these charming localities are presented to his admiring gaze as the vehicle rolls slowly along over one of the prettiest drives in the vicinity. Then the scene is changed, and he is introduced to Victoria Arm. His wonder increases as beauty after beauty, each seeming to out-class that which has just gone before, are disclosed and he comes back to the hotel satisfied that all which has been said in regard to the attractiveness of Victoria, and its suitability for a summer resort, is more than justified. Then if he has time to spare and he is wise he makes inquiries and is informed that even yet there is something more to take in. "Haven't you made the trip up the E. & N. railway?" is the probable query of the hotel clerk, and replying in the negative, he is strongly advised to make the trip, providing he wishes to make his knowledge of the southern portion of Vancouver island as thorough as possible.



Running the Rapids—Cowichan River

Beauty Spots Along E. & N.

It is unnecessary to enter into a description of the many resorts scattered along the line of the aforementioned railway They are as well known to Victorians as is Government street. For years they have been frequented, summer after summer, nobody seeming to tire of them; rather have they attracted more and more attention. In fact so pronounced became the weekly travel, especially to points between the city and Shawnigan lake, that a year or so ago the management of the Esquimalt & Nanaimo railway inaugurated what is termed the suburban train service. This was a special which ran morning and evening, during the "dog days," to and from Shawnigan lake. The rates for transportation on this line were materially reduced. The patronage which the company received more than justified the innovation, and, it is understood, the service will be inaugurated again this season. It will be introduced about the 1st of June, according to the present arrangements, that being about the period when the majority of campers and those who spend the hottest months of the summer months out of the city make the change

A Popular Trip.

In taking a trip up the railway as far as Duncan, thence to Cowichan lake, a jaunt which is a favorite among the many disciples of Isaac Walton, who find their way to this part of Vancouver island, the visitor passes some of the grandest scenery to be found anywhere adjacent to Victoria. The portion of the line which skirts the banks of Saanich Inlet presents a panorama of great beauty. Invariably it elicits admiring comment. Away below is the water of the inlet, winding in and out, closely adhering to the sinuosities of the mountain ranges which stand on either side. The expanse of sea is broken here and there by islets, adding to the picturesqueness. So striking is the view that the stranger turning to some individual, who, by the careslessness of his attitude, bears the imprint of the native, asks for information. He is told that this is one of the finest fishing resorts in the neighborhood, that salmon can be caught at all seasons, and that large numbers spend the week-end here in the enjoyment of the pleasures of the sport.

Shawnigan Lake.

The next point which attracts attention is Shawnigan lake. "Strathcona hotel," shouts the brakeman, and, before the stranger realizes the fact, he is looking into the hallway of a charming country hostelry. Wide verandas, spacious, grounds, a crowd of gaily clad people, and away in the distance the waters of the lake glistening in the sunlight. The sight stirs his artistic appreciation, and the summery attire of the guests, gathered to watch the arrival and departure of the train, combined with the heat, rouses a desire for a beverage. He obtains a cooling drink and once more boards the train, regretting that his prearranged plans make it impossible for him to spend more than a few moments here. With a whirl the journey is continued and, almost immediately, another stop is made at Koenig's. Here the visitor has almost the same impressions as outlined, and, as a rule, is afflicted with the same desire to test the hospitality of the genial proprietress

Cowichan Valley

Thus the outing proceeds, the stranger becoming almost surfeited with scenery, and settling down to the silent enjoyment of the kaleidoscopic picture. He passes Cobble Hill and numerous side stations before, finally, pulling up at the charming little town of Duncan. After viewing the grand mountain scenery just out from Victoria the centre of the Cowichan valley is soothing and congenial to the temperament of the visitor, especially if he happen to be of English origin. Because here he sees a pastoral district, which is almost a perfect facsimile of some of the agricultural sections of the Old Country. Such an impression is strengthened if he happens to make the acquaintance of any of the residents. As a rule, however, he hastens to collect his baggage, pays particular attention to his fishing tackle and boards the stage for Cowichan lake, to reach which he must travel some twenty miles or thereabouts

To Cowichan Lake

En route he enters into conversation with the stage driver. It starts in a desultory fashion, but becomes animated as the latter begins to tell of the Cowichan river, of the many remarkable catches which have been made by other enthusiasts, and the spots wherein the wily trout are supposed to lie in large numbers The ears of the visitor are open wide, not a word misses him. "That's the entrance to Sahtlam," quoths the driver, pointing to a road branching off the main thoroughfare. "What, you don't know of Sahtlam, you never heard of it!" and the manipulator of the ribbons looks with thinly veiled contempt at the votary of the rod and line at his side. "That's an Indian settlement," he explains, 'and thereabouts the biggest catches ever recorded in connection with the Cowichan river have been made. Trout and steelhead abound, and the Indians of the place take visitors in their canoes for rides down the stream to the outlet. That's an experience, by-the-way, which you should make a point of enjoying It's thrilling. You shoot over fast flowing rapids, along smooth and spacious pools, down falls, and in and out among some of the finest scenes to be found anywhere." The stranger listens to the description, and, not wishing to display ignorance, asks no questions, but determines to follow the advice of his self-appointed mentor.

"Why, didn't you never hear of the visit of Prince Arthur of Connaught," queries the loquacious driver. Again the stranger is forced to acknowledge that he isn't posted. And the former condescends to relate the story of the famous visit of Royalty to the fishing grounds of the locality He recounts the arrangement which had been made to give the prince the benefit of a trip down the river from its head-waters in a canoe guided by Indians. The scheme had only failed in its execution because of the short stay made by the distinguished visitor. But he goes on to tell of Prince Arthur's experiences at the lake, how he caught several fish, and of his pleasure as he landed the glittering, wiggly trout safely in the bottom of the boat. Thus are the few hours necessary for the drive occupied, and, ultimately, the enthusiastic angler arrives at his destination. Through the twilight he catches a faint glimpse of a body of water twenty-five miles in length, studded with small islands, hedged in by stately mountains. Entering the Lakeside hotel he meets the genial proprietor, Ernest Price, and Mrs Price, both of whom accord him a hearty welcome. Having satisfied a healthy appetite, he retires with keen anticipation of the morrow's sport.

Accommodation Crowded.

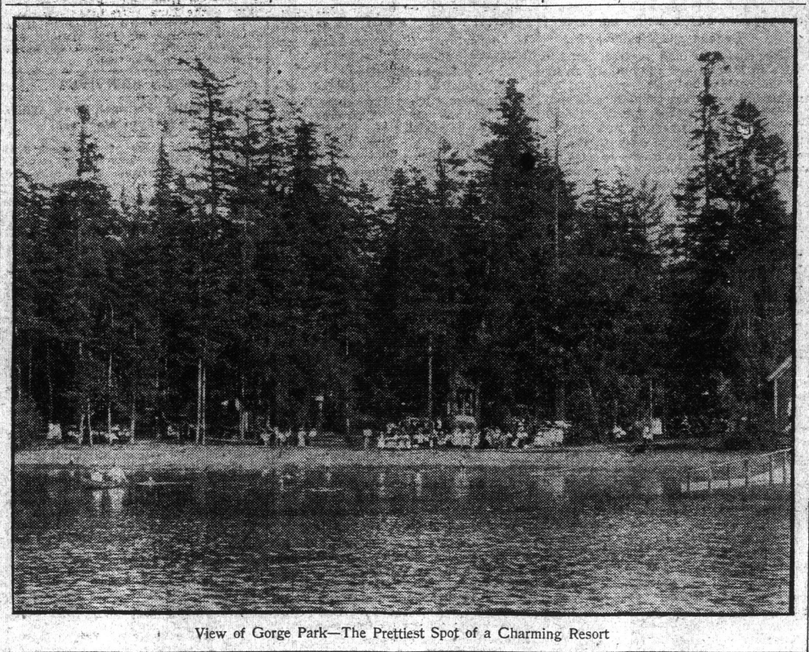
It has been stated that the charms of the resorts along the E. & N. line are not appreciated by Victorians. In a measure this may be correct. There is no doubt that the tourist who has the time to make the trip which has been outlined always leaves the island with the pleasantest recollections and the determination to return at the earliest opportunity. But the indications are that the beauties of Shawnigan lake and of Cowichan river and lake are thoroughly appreciated by local citizens. For weeks past the majority of the small cottages at Shawnigan and along the Cowichan river have been rented for the summer months. It is doubtful, in fact, if one inquiring at this late date would be able to secure any such accommodation for a family. It is true that there are hotels at these places—and moreover well equipped and modern in every respect—but they cannot take in the ever-increasing crowds which gather there during the summer months This condition has prevailed for several years, and, in the past, it has been necessary for those, who, otherwise, would have taken small bungalows, to erect tents and to "camp out." The same thing will have to be done this summer, but, it is predicted by those who have watched the trend of events, that in the near future these spots will become so extremely popular, so largely frequented, that further hotel accommodation will be supplied, and they will take the place of auxiliaries to the one central tourist resort of the North Pacific—Victoria.

Other Resorts

While the E. & N line is dotted with these picturesque places the city, as stated at the outset, is surrounded with them. They are to be seen on every hand and within easy reach of the centre of the community. All have their little coteries of admirers among local citizens. For instance it is an invariable rule that, with the advent of the hot weather, small tented villages will spring up like mushrooms in the night at these different localities And the personnel of these summer villages is almost always the same. At Oak Bay beach gathers a group of young men who have camped together at the same spot for years, at the Willows beach a similar condition of affairs is revealed annually, at Cadboro Bay it is the same, but at Cordova Bay there are usually a large number of changes. This is one of the most popular of the suburban resorts. It is largely frequented, in fact the beautiful sandy beach, two or three miles in length, is generally covered with tents, while upon the banks above are quite a few pretty little cottages, all of which have occupants out enjoying the fresh air of the country, away from the stifling atmosphere of the city. And at night the crowds gather about huge bonfires and tell mythical stories, while others with torch-light boats search for the glistening back of the fascinated dogfish. By the use of sharply pointed spears they are able in this way to capture many and enjoy the sport immensely.

The Gorge

Then there is the gorge, the last, but by no means the least. The charms of this locality, it is safe to say, are more or less generally known throughout Canada and it is no exaggeration to say, that they are destined to spread yet further as the reputation of Victoria's multitudinous beauties are disseminated by the ever increasing ebb and flow of tourists. While the Arm possesses sufficient natural attractiveness to win a reputation, it has natural advantages for the establishment of parks which are not being overlooked. The recreation grounds of the B. C. Electric Railway Company are being artistically beautified This year there is being constructed a Japanese tea garden, which should be well patronized. Other improvements are under way and, when the whole is completed the park is expected to be fully equal in every respect to the famous gardens of the tourist resorts of southern California. However, those who wish to see the Gorge and the adjacent park under the most striking conditions should not fail to be present at the fireworks display to be held in connection with the Victoria Day celebrations.



View of Gorge Park—The Prettiest Spot of a Charming Resort

The Saanich Peninsula

In speaking of the beautiful surroundings which Victoria possesses, the Saanich peninsula, with its fertile agricultural lands, its game and other resources and its mile upon mile of splendid sandy beaches should not be overlooked. This is one of the most thickly populated farming sections on the southern portion of Vancouver Island and, moreover, every family enjoys prosperity. In referring to Saanich, however, more than this is conveyed to the mind of the average Victorian. He thinks of the glorious resorts which abound there and of the pleasant days which may be spent in tents situated near the sea shore where bathing may be indulged in at any hour, where the disciple of Nimrod may take a tramp gun in hand and return in a few hours with a handsome bag of ducks, pheasant or grouse. In a word, it is sure to say that there could be no more delightful place than Saanich and that those whose homes are located there are among the most favored of the citizens of this part of the Canadian West. So popular is the district among citizens that it has been the custom for years past of members of the Methodist Sunday schools of the city to hold their Dominion Day picnics at the Bazan Bay park, one of the prettiest of the many lovely spots to be found in the aforementioned peninsula Without making a trip through the district on the V. & S. railway the tourist has not a complete idea of the attractions offered by this part of Vancouver Island.

Added to all the scenic advantages which have been referred to, Victoria has a climate, which in point of equality in temperature, cannot be equalled on the continent. This is a statement which is proven by statistics. Therefore, as has been averred time and again by members of the Victoria Development and Tourist Association, there is nothing standing in the way of British Columbia's capital taking her proper place as the residential seat and the most popular summer and winter resort of the Pacific Northwest.

A Favorite Fishing Pool—Cowichan River

Duncan

The pretty little town of Duncan, 40 miles from Victoria on the Esquimalt & Nanaimo railway, is the business centre and distributing point for several neighboring mines and lumber camps. The town is delightfully situated on the Cowichan river (celebrated for its trout fishing), at the foot of Mount Prevost. It has several well stocked stores, a creamery, a saw mill, an agricultural hall surrounded by a pretty park, a public school, government office, two churches, three hotels, and all the necessary industrial establishments, such as harness making, blacksmithing, etc. The Cowichan Leader, a weekly paper, advocates the interests of the town and district. Duncan has a good waterworks system, and many of the farm houses in the district have water laid on from the numerous springs and creeks.

Standing on the southern edge of the lake country, Duncan is a headquarters for fishermen and hunters. Somenos lake, one mile, and Quamichan lake, two miles from the town, are favorite resorts for trout fishers, while Cowichan lake, 22 miles westward and reached by stage coach, has a good hotel and every accommodation for disciples of the gentle art. The surrounding woods and hills abound with large and small game; bear, panther, wolf and deer, grouse and pheasant, and the marshes and ponds swarm with ducks and geese. Maple Bay, three miles east, affords excellent sea fishing.

West of Duncan, in the Cowichan valley, there is a large area of good land, that portion on the north shore of Cowichan lake being an almost level country admirably adapted to farming. From the lake to the Nitinat river and Barkley sound the country is more rugged, heavily timbered and reported to be one of the richest mineral sections of British Columbia.

Ladysmith

The shipping port for the Extension coal mines, is a growing town, five miles north of Chemainus. It has a good harbor and commodious docks. At this point the Canadian Pacific railway maintains a ferry service to and from Vancouver, transferring trains of freight cars loaded with goods for Victoria and other places on the Island, and carrying Island products to continental points. Ladysmith has a large public school, several churches, good hotels and stores, and several industries, among which are the Tyee Copper company's smelter, the Ladysmith Lumber company's sawmill, and an iron foundry. It is the centre of the Newcastle district and the home of the miners who work in the Extension mines, eight miles west. The land about Ladysmith is fertile, but broken and densely timbered. There is considerable land in the valleys which will make good farms and orchards when cleared.

Nanaimo

Called the Coal City, is also the centre of a coal mining district and headquarters of the Western Fuel company. It is 72 miles from Victoria, with which it has a daily train service over the Esquimalt & Nanaimo railway, and 35 miles from Vancouver, to which city the Canadian Pacific railway runs daily steamers. It also has steamboat communication with Comox and Sidney. The city is one of the oldest on the Island, the coal mines having been operated since 1850, and is well equipped with all public conveniences, schools, churches, mercantile and industrial establishments. When the mines are in full operation the number of men employed is large, the monthly pay roll aggregating over $100,000. There is much good land in the Nanaimo district, and wherever it has been cleared and cultivated the returns are very satisfactory. The farms in the district do not begin to supply the city's wants, so that there are good openings for fruit, poultry and dairy farms.

Tributary to Nanaimo are Mountain, Cedar, Oyster, Bright, Cranberry, Douglas, Wellington, Nanoose and Cameron districts. Mountain is broken, with considerable good land in the Millstream valley, and the uplands furnish excellent grazing, with large and small timber of good quality. Cedar and Cranberry districts very much resemble Cowichan and possess large areas of good farming land. North of these districts the character of the soil changes, inclining to be sandy and gravelly, in patches, but around Qualicum it again reverts to a rich loam of the best quality. A good deal of land is under cultivation in the country lying between Nanaimo and Comox, but much of the best of it is still unreclaimed, and many thousand acres will be available when cleared of timber.

Wellington, the present terminus of the Esquimalt & Nanaimo railway, was formerly a town of considerable importance, but since the closing of the coal mines in that district, has lost much of its trade. There is considerable good land in the neighborhood, the area of which will be increased by clearing.

Crofton

Crofton, situated on Osborne bay, about 40 miles north of Victoria, is the site of a large copper smelting plant, lately purchased by the Britannia Mining company. A narrow gauge railway connects the town with the Mount Sicker mines, and a stage line runs to Duncan. Crofton has two good hotels, and several general stores and other business establishments. Like all the towns along the line of the E. & N. railway, it is connected by telephone with Victoria and Nanaimo.

Chemainus

Chemainus, a good farming district, very heavily timbered, with soil and other conditions almost identical with Cowichan, is the seat of a great lumbering industry. The mill of the Victoria Lumbering & Manufacturing company, with a daily capacity of 500,000 feet of lumber, is situated here, and, with the company's logging railway and lumber camps, gives employment to a large number of men. Chemainus has a well equipped hospital.

Comox

Extending from the northern boundary of Nanaimo lies Comox district, considered one of the best agricultural and dairying sections of Vancouver Island. Sixty miles long with an average width of seven miles, between the sea and the mountains, is a bench of undulating land admirably adapted to cultivation. Parts of it are heavily timbered, and there are many marshes and beaver meadows easy of reclamation. Several valleys cut through from the mountains to the sea, and these are specially fertile. All of this bench land will produce crops. Where it is too light for growing cereals or roots it will give large returns in hay and alfalfa. The growth is marvelous, a bit of burnt land sowed with grass seed will become a tangled mass of vegetation within a year. Cattle fatten on the native grasses and vetches in a wonderfully short time. Butter making and poultry raising are carried on as adjuncts to the regular farm work, but so far have not been engaged in systematically. A good local market for everything produced is afforded by the Union coal mines, with headquarters at Cumberland. These mines employ between 800 and 1,000 men, who, with their families, are good customers of the neighboring farmers, paying liberal prices for everything they consume. Grain is raised in considerable quantity, but only for feeding stock. Oats yield well and sell for 1 1-2 cents per pound. Butter averages 25 cents per pound, beef 7 1-2 cents to 10 cents by the carcass. Cows are worth $50 to $70 each. Lambs $5 to $6, ewes usually breed twins. Hogs bring 8 to 9 cents live weight. Eggs sell from 25 to 60 cents per dozen. Apples, pears, plums, prunes, cherries and small fruits are cultivated to a limited extent and all produced is of excellent quality.

Much of the wooded land in Comox district is easily cleared, being chiefly alder, and the swamps are not difficult to drain. The swamp bottoms are remarkably fertile, producing splendid crops of grain and vegetables.

Communication is had with Comox by wagon road and from Wellington (the present terminus of the Esquimalt & Nanaimo railway), and by steamers running to Nanaimo, Victoria and way ports. A short line of railway connects Cumberland with Union wharf, the shipping point of the Union coal mines.