

# Sport in Alberni

...BY...  
RICHARD L. POCKOCK

(Continued From Last Week)



HAVING arrived at Alberni, the sportsman has abundance of ground to hunt over for the various kinds of game, and a great variety of waters in which to fish. If he desires to add an elk head to his collection of trophies the best plan is to enlist the help of one of the residents to engage Indian guides; when he has secured the right Indians for the job nothing but the worst of luck should prevent him bringing home the coveted specimen. To bag a bear or two he would do as well as any way to drive right up to the Duke of York mining camp, reached by a good road all the way from the old or new town, and he will be there in some of the best territory possible for hunting bear in the spring-time; in the fall they will be found lower down feeding on the salmon that run up every creek in the district.

It is quite needless to specify any particular places for the hunting of other sorts of game, as he can hardly go wrong once he arrives at Alberni. It might be, perhaps, while though to mention that panther are common in the hills, as any of the farmers will tell you, and that there is a good chance of shooting one or two if he has the right sort of dogs with him, but that it is waste of time to go in search of them without. Sometimes they become very bold in the winter and come quite close to the settlement; one was shot in the middle of New Alberni from the door or window of one of the houses a few years ago while the writer was living in the place, but possibly this would not be very likely to happen now that the town has grown to more substantial proportions, and even boasts a newspaper of its own.

By the kind assistance of some of the old residents who have a wide experience of the fishing in the district of Alberni, I am able to give all the details necessary of the different waters in the neighborhood to enable a fisherman to plan a campaign extended or otherwise.

In the first place, let it be understood that splendid fly-fishing can be had in any one of the numerous streams in the valley near Alberni, so that the angler whose time is limited and who cannot stray far from headquarters need have no fear of blank days or overcrowded water; if there is any crowd it will be a crowd of fish, not of anglers. For those who have the time and inclination to stray further afield the following places can be highly recommended:

## Great Central Lake

The distance from Alberni to Great Central lake is ten miles; the sportsman can drive right through all the way to the lake from the town. At the lake end of the road there is a cabin in which visitors can camp. There is a gasoline launch there and a canoe owned by the discoverer and locator of the famous Big Interior mine, a vast deposit of copper ore. The lake is about twenty-one miles long and averages a mile in width. At the head of the lake is another cabin belonging to the same owner. Two small streams run into the lake at the head, but they are not navigable.

In the lake are trout, and plenty of them, from one to three pounds in weight. The best time for fishing this water is in June and July, and the flies that have been proved to be the best killers are: Coachman, Black Zulu, Brown Hackle, Coachman, and Silver Doctor. There is splendid trolling in the lake and also good fly-fishing in the two streams at the head as well as at the outlet.

## Sproat Lake

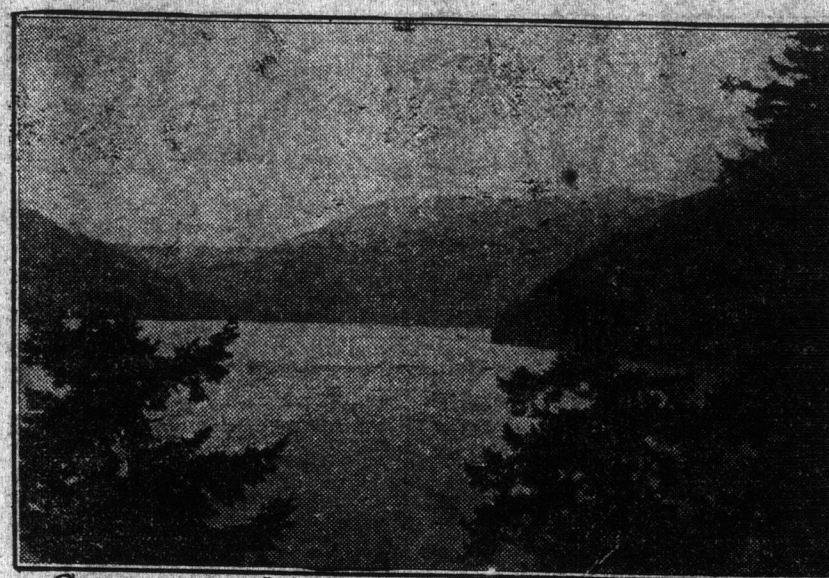
The distance of this lake from Alberni is six miles over a good road, and there are several old houses on the shores where tourists can make camp. This lake, the Lake Lucerne as it has been called of Vancouver Island, is thirteen miles long, with numerous arms. There is splendid trolling in this water as well as good fly-fishing; the trout running in weight from one to nine pounds and being of two varieties, large, white-fleshed lake trout and also the sea trout which run up all the island rivers wherever possible. There is a canoe on this lake for hire. The fly-fishing at the outlet is particularly good, and the same flies will kill as on Great Central.

## McCoy Lake

This is a small, muddy and marshy lake about four miles from Alberni, but capable of yielding good sport within easy distance from home, as the trout in it average one-and-a-half pounds in weight, though, as the water grows warm in the summer months, the fish get rather soft; there is a raft here to fish from, and the flies recommended for the other water will be found equally satisfactory here.

## Bainbridge and Cox's Lakes

Two small lakes four and three miles respectively from the town, appeal more especially to the bait fishermen; as though they contain plenty of good trout, from half-a-pound to a



CAMERON LAKE, V.I.

pound-and-a-half in weight, they are mostly taken with bait, the best time to fish them being in March, as the fish get too soft to be at their best in the warm weather; rafts to fish from will be found on both.

An outing on either of the two first mentioned lakes can hardly be beaten for good, all-round sport and for picturesqueness and beauty of natural surroundings.

As a change from inland and lake travel the sportsman should not omit a trip down the salt-water canal, which can be made either in row-boats or by gasoline launch.

About three miles from the New Alberni wharf, on the right hand side going down the canal is Cous creek, which affords fairly good fishing with either fly or bait, the best time for the sea trout here is in the fall, but smaller fish can be caught in plenty all through the summer; there is an old cabin about a mile up the creek.

Six miles or so from here, on the other side of the canal is China creek, where trout will be found fairly numerous and easiest taken in June, July and August. The banks are thickly wooded, so the angler who wants fish must be prepared to wade. A good place to camp is at the Duke of York mineral claim (deserted placer diggings).

Granite creek is about ten miles down the canal; it is a small mountain stream containing brook trout, and the best month to fish it is July. The fishing in these three creeks is particularly good, owing to the low temperature of the water coming down from the high mountains.

## Nahmint River

is on the right hand side of the canal going down to the ocean and about twelve miles down; the river, which is about nine miles long, is the outlet of a lake of the same name. The fishing in both the river and the lake is hard to beat, and this water has never been fished much owing to the comparatively long distance from a settlement. The big Tyee salmon run up this river and can be freely caught by trolling near the mouth in September.

Coho salmon run up most of the rivers mentioned; fly-fishing for salmon has not been practised very much here but they are known to have been caught on the fly, so that probably experienced anglers who properly understand this branch of the sport would be able to successfully fly-fish for salmon; those who are content with trolling can expect all the sport they could ever dream of and must be prepared to try conclusions with the monsters of the tribe, as the Alberni canal is one of the places where the biggest sort of British Columbia salmon run, fish frequently being caught sixty pounds and over in weight. On the road into Alberni the only lake of any size is Cameron lake, which is about four miles long and affords excellent trout-fishing in the summer. Sport is also good in Cameron river, flowing into the head of the lake, as well as in the little Qualicum which runs out of it.

In a word, almost any stream around Alberni will afford good trout fishing, while the sea-trout are very numerous in the fall in the Somas and near the mouth in the tributaries. Local enthusiasts can look forward to the railway now being built bringing within easy reach a district affording unlimited opportunities for the exercise of their favorite pastime.

## THE UNATTAINABLE TROUT

I know a pool where the river,  
Sunlit and still,  
Slips by a bank of wild roses  
Down from the mill;  
There do I linger when summer makes glorious  
Valley and hill.

Somewhere the song of a skylark  
Melts into air,  
Butterflies float through the sunshine,  
June's everywhere;  
Nature, in fact, shows an amiable jollity  
I do not share.

For in the shade of the alders,  
So mild of face,  
There is a trout that no cunning  
Coaxes to rise.  
"Slim" as Ulysses and doubtful as Didymus,  
Mammoth in size.

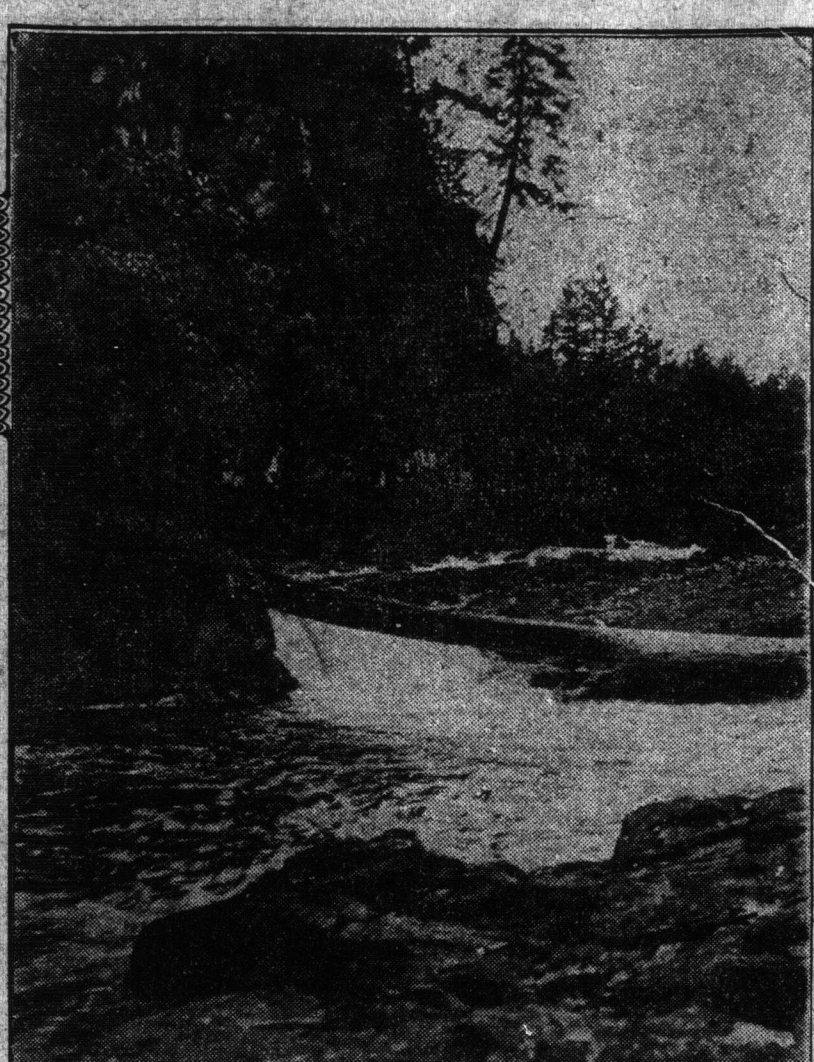
And when the May fly battalions  
Flutter and skim,  
When all the others are filling  
Skeets a-brim,  
I spend the cream of the fly-fishing carnival  
Waiting at him.

Seeing in fancy my huckle  
Saluted with a founce,  
Hearing the reel pacing madly  
Under his pounce,  
Knowing at last all the pounds of his magnitude  
(Eight is an ounce?)

But of my drakes and my wedges  
None make the kill,  
None tempt him up from his fastness  
Under the mill,  
And, for I saw him as lately as Saturday,  
There he is still.

Thus do life's triumphs elude us;  
Yet it may be  
Some afternoon, when the keeper  
Goes to his tea,  
That if a leechworm were dropped unobtrusively—  
Well, we shall see.

—Funch.



SPROAT RIVER, ALBERNI



SOMAS RIVER, ALBERNI

## PHEASANT SHOOTING EXTRAORDINARY

In the Toon-Yen district of Kwei-Chow province, Central China, the country is rough and mountainous and the common pheasant of the country, though fairly well scattered over the hills, is by no means as plentiful as in the lower altitudes and more level districts. It is, however, sufficiently numerous to make it interesting for a sportsman to climb the hillsides with a good dog and gun.

In parts of China where small game is plentiful the native gunners attain to a by no means contemptible skill with their fire-arms of various antique patterns, and can bring down a snipe on the wing with more or less certainty. But in the district named, probably owing to the comparative scarcity of small game, wing-shooting is an unknown accomplishment among them, and it is only at a certain season of the year that they consider it worth their while to sally forth to slaughter Phasianus torquatus.

When they do, great are the preparations and extraordinary the method used to accomplish their end.

It is to be hoped none of those who read these lines will be tempted to imitate the method, but I think there is little fear of that, so that no harm can be done by describing their rather amusing, though to the strict sportsman, horrifying proceedings.

First and foremost it must be stated that the certain season alluded to is the breeding season, but let it at once be urged that only the cock-birds are killed. I have never seen a Chinaman with a hen-pheasant which he has shot; indeed some of them have confided to me that the hens were unfit for food and even poisonous at this time of year, a belief that I was at no pains to try and destroy.

A nest of pheasant's eggs is a legitimate prize, and with the aid of a broody hen, the patient Chinese will usually succeed in rearing one or two, and the birds thus raised are taken great care of and become very tame. By the way, the Chinese are great people for caged birds and other pets, and cruel and lousy though they can be, and usually are, it is never too much trouble for them to attend to these pets. It is an everyday sight to see a coolie carrying his bird with him in its cage when he goes to his work in the fields. It is placed near him while he is working and carried home again at night. The tame pheasant he has reared is essential to his success in bagging others for the pot, as he seldom thinks it worth while to go a-gunning without a decoy.

His next job is to make a carrying cage

for his tame hen-pheasant, for it is a hen that he uses as a rule to attract his game.

This is an extremely neat arrangement, made of bamboo basket-work. It is made just large enough for the bird to squat in and shaped to its body; the front is formed by a door of little bamboo bars hinged at the bottom, while, the back being left open, the bird's latter end and tail protrude. The cage is usually built on a little stand of carved wood and is fitted on the top with a handle to carry it by.

Now for our pig-tailed sportsman's weapon. This is indeed a formidable-looking affair, being often as much as six feet in length, and sometimes even longer. It has no butt that can be put to the shoulder, but merely a pistol-shaped stock of wood. Muzzle-loading, of course, and of small calibre, it has a touch-hole at the side and a big pan for priming, over which fits a leather cap to keep the powder dry. In place of a hammer it is fitted with a kind of claw, into which is wedged an end of touch-rope, the other end being usually wound round the stock. When brought into action this claw is pulled back against a spring and held by a clumsy trigger which hooks into its other end.

Armed thus with two yards or more of gun, his decoy hen in his little traveling basket-cage and a handful of joss-sticks, friend John sallies forth at earliest dawn to some likely spot where probably a cock-pheasant has already betrayed its presence with its voice. Here the decoy hen is allowed to step out from its basket, though still secured by a line attached to its leg, the other end being fastened to a peg; a few grains of rice are sprinkled on the ground for it to peck at, and the hunter retires with his gun behind a convenient bush to await the approach of the love-smitten wild bird. If there is a cock-bird in the vicinity the hunter will not have long to wait before it approaches the hen. Intent on courtship, it has no suspicion of the near presence of the hunter in his ambush, who blows his match and prepares to take aim. Taking good care not to shoot except when the wild bird is a safe distance from his valuable decoy, but also, be sure, well within range of his powder and scrap-iron, he pulls the trigger, the priming puffs, at an appreciable interval the charge explodes, and if his aim be true and the range close enough, he has obtained a prize worth to him in the open market at least the equivalent of a day's hard labor, so that even though he bag no more that day, he will go home completely satisfied with the result of his expedition.

Thus in his native habitat is done to death the fine sporting bird whose cousins afford us such good sport on this our island home,

where they have guns more numerous and more accurate (in some hands) to escape, although they are not attacked in so treacherous a manner.

RICHARD L. POCKOCK.

## TOURISTS KILL BEAR

Harry S. Jordan and Joseph B. Jordan, of Grand Rapids, Mich., who arrived here last week, and went up Taylor River on a bear hunting trip, returned on Tuesday with their trophy, as large and fine a piece of black fur as has ever been stripped from the carcass of the king beast of these forests.

The hunters were accompanied by William Lindsay and Julius Donner as guides, and beat their way through the trackless wilds almost to the head of the stream, a region of the interior that has been visited by but few human beings. All along their route they saw traces of big game, and had many opportunities which were not taken advantage of because of the difficulties of packing.

The bear that was chosen as victim was a female with two cubs. When the mother received the fatal bullet wound the youngsters quickly scrambled to the top of a 75-foot tree and there sought refuge. As there was, apparently, no chance of taking them alive without a long wait, the cubs were also killed, but the hides were found to be too tender for stripping.

Mr. Harry Jordan says the country he went through on the hunt is the most wonderful he has ever seen, the trip was the toughest and, withal, the most interesting of his life.—Alberni Pioneer News.

## MOUNTAIN QUAIL

Sportsmen who are familiar with the sport-giving value of the mountain quail will be interested in the following remarks by a fellow-sportsman on the other side of the line, writing in "The Breeder and Sportsman." In view of the growing scarcity of blue grouse it might afford a means of letting off superfluous enthusiasm on the part of some of our more youthful gunners if they waged a war against the destructive blue-jay on this side of the line also. I. H. McKim says:

"That noble game-bird, former furnisher of sport most royal—the mountain quail—is surely and swiftly passing from our midst, and unless strenuous measures are quickly and forcibly advanced, the time is very near when it will become an extinct bird."

The rapid decrease in the past four years is startling to anyone cognizant of it.

Where a few years ago one might go almost any day in autumn and secure the game limit in a few hours, last fall he could wander over the same ground all day without seeing so much as a trace of a bird.

The cause of their rapid extinction is attributable to several causes—first and foremost of which is the incessant war so mercilessly waged upon the young quail by that great mischief-maker, the bluejay.

Many nests are destroyed yearly by being trampled by sheep, but this seems rather unavoidable. It is seemingly impracticable to attempt legislation upon that issue.

Many young and old birds perish in the vast forest fires which sweep through the wooded regions at intervals; but this is being in a great measure alleviated by the enforcement of the state fire laws.

The bluejay, however, over which we could exercise some control, is allowed to go on in his abominable work of rapine unchecked.

A few years ago the Kimball-Upson company, being aware of the havoc wrought to the quail by jays, offered prizes for their scalps.

Many of the pests were slain, and there was a noticeable increase in the number of flocks in the hills that fall.

Now, this is a serious proposition to all lovers of field sports, and we should wake up and do something before the quail is entirely exterminated.

What will take their place to the busy man whose only recreation for the entire year is the few days he annually spends afield with dog and gun?

When any difference in the number of birds could be observed as results of the feeble efforts of a single corporation, how much greater results would be obtained were we to go at it with some system and with united energy.

We could right away eradicate the bluejay; the state forester and his corps of co-workers will minimize the yearly reduction of fire, and later we may do something about the sheep.

There are several minor causes of destruction, but they are of much less magnitude and can be easily lessened.

Let the gun clubs and all others interested in the wild sports of the state arouse themselves and see what can be done to protect our king of game birds."

## TROUT FISHING

Once in a while a fisherman needs midges—flies the size of one's little finger nail. It requires most delicate manipulation to land a trout on a tiny hook, but it is done.

There is a little trick on rift fishing which I do not remember seeing described. The habit of fishermen is to fish down stream as one wades with the current. Side casts are made, of course, but usually casts are made slovenly down the current. A market fisherman who was catching fish when I was not, though using the same flies, told me the difference. He said, "Don't fish down stream—it wastes time. Fish across stream, and let your flies drift down, dancing on the water. Flies never go up stream when they are on the water surface—the current carries them down stream. They don't go diagonally up stream either. They float down the current, or diagonally down the current."—Forest and Stream.