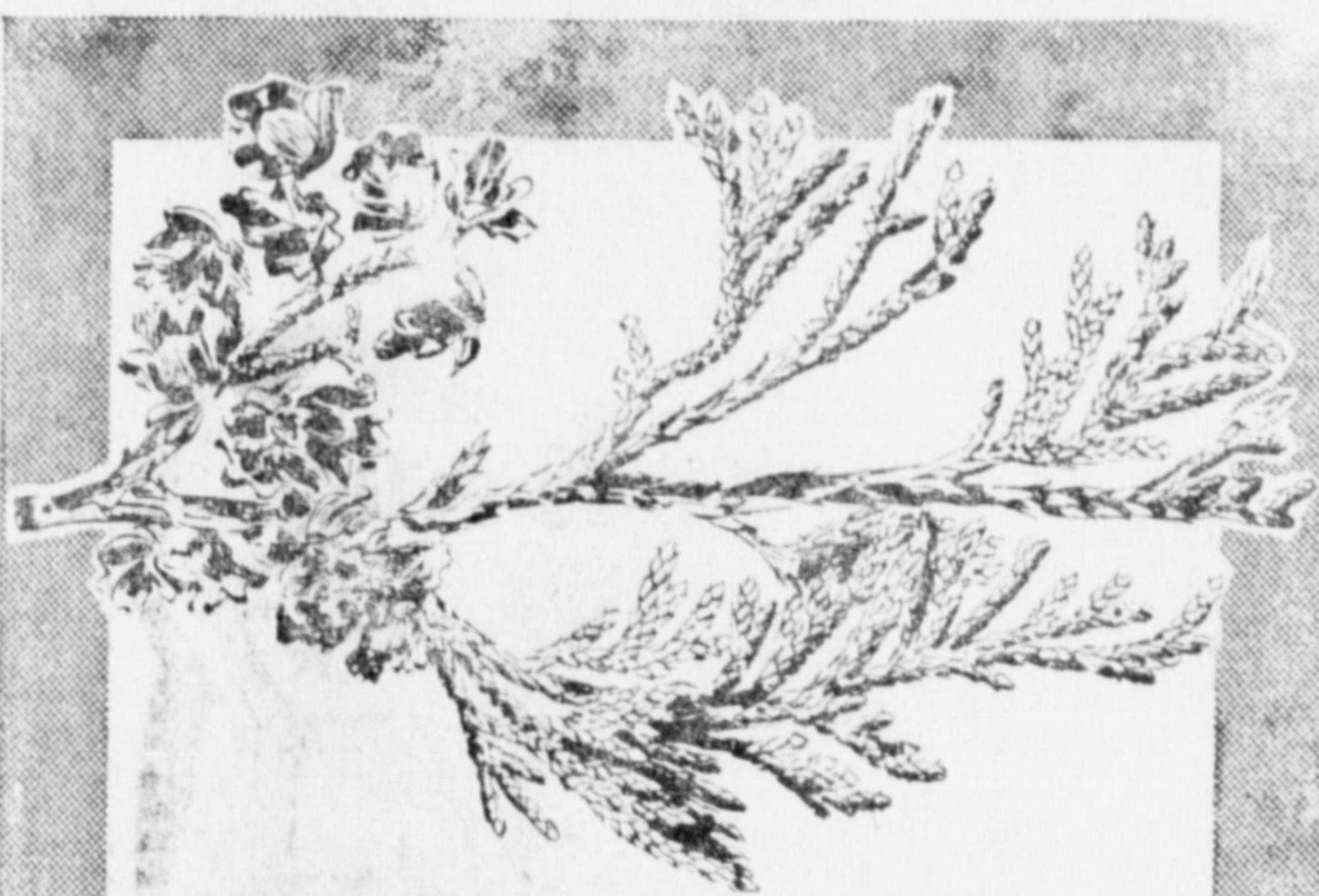


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THIS AND THAT



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LIFE in this Prince Rupert

by BIDDEE JINKS

Figuratively speaking the Queen Charlottes are draped in black since the Union Steamship Co. announced their newly proposed schedule. Certainly they are in mourning over there, with a grief as deep as David's of old when "he lifted up his voice and wept." For the thought of a final departure of the Cassiar, never called anything but "the good old Prince John" on the Islands—surfaces a sentiment built up by a 45-year service without precedent.

This sentiment belongs to many beyond our own border. This summer, enroute to Vancouver, an American lady at our table spoke so frequently of a boat she and her husband affectionately called "the good old Prince John." They had travelled many successive years aboard her in days long gone. Those trips were undoubtedly the most joyous ever spent, and now they could find no trace of her. Many times I heard her ask the same question, "What has become of the old Prince John?" And I, nor anyone else, knew to tell her that the name had been changed to the far-fetched Cassiar.

Once, living far inland, I glimpsed briefly through "The Wreck of the Hesperus," that somewhere people depend upon upon boats and are compassed by water as treacherous as it is wonderful; that boats are called "shee" and become in truth a living thing. Since coming to Prince Rupert, I too have entered into that spirit so that a boat moving through the water brings an incomprehensible thrill. Yet, as compared to the families isolated except for the coming and going of a boat, my feelings are nil.

It would be very difficult to picture exactly what the "old Prince John" means to the people it has nurtured for so long. Arriving at Queen Charlotte City, be it 2 p.m. or 2 a.m., every available soul, women and children alike, hurried to meet it. It was a glad meeting of old friends. Sometimes it was more than that, for one critically ill

with a construction that steered them safely to port.

BeBrt Robinson, now senior purser on the Prince Rupert, was purser. Being single and of warm disposition, he obliged all the ladies. When the boat left Queen Charlotte, he usually carried a lengthy list of shopping to be done in Vancouver—articles not always to the liking of an unattached male.

That was the spirit of the whole crew and the Island people relied upon them. If someone in port were sick the larder of the boat was open to them for a bit of fresh meat, a little fruit or even ice to cool a small fevered tongue.

On board was the atmosphere of "one big family." On one occasion Premier Pattullo was serenaded by a group at his door during the wee small hours of the morning. When he sleepily made an appearance he was presented with a celery bouquet in flourishig style. No longer drowsy, he ordered supper and a party of fun and frolic finished the night.

Occasionally the people found opportunity to show their gratitude. When coal was unloaded (onto a barge out in the harbor) the boat was docked several hours. Quickly, word spread and messengers scurried from house to house. It was, "You bring a cake and we will have a party." It was a happy affair of cake and deer-meat sandwiches topped by dancing until last possible minute.

The Prince John has perhaps done more of the unusual than any other coastal boat with no thought other than service. Once a very stout woman was put ashore by a sling at Naden Harbor. At no time was it unusual to suddenly anchor somewhere for an hour or more while a passenger rowed in from some isolated spot, came finally along side, climbed up the rope ladder and aboard to be welcomed as if he were the brother of every watching person on board.

Was Hit by Disaster Too
Disaster struck hard at her by times. Once it was a fire which began in the mail-room. Lifeboats were unslung and passengers prepared for emergency. Meanwhile, the boat went full steam ahead, knowing it impossible to go ashore in so fierce a wind. Finally, they came into Sandspit, a volcano of smoke. It was met by a curious crowd who had long been watching, at first trying to analyse that moving blob of smoke on the horizon. Strangely the only item not destroyed was a fur coat which had come by mail order. It was not even singed. A lady, telling me of the incident said, "I can see it yet, that coat hanging in the captain's office, the only thing that wasn't burned."

Another time there was a

collision at Lawn Hill between the freighter Prince Albert and the Prince John. It was snowing heavily and the freighter was holed quite badly, the Prince John however, made port.

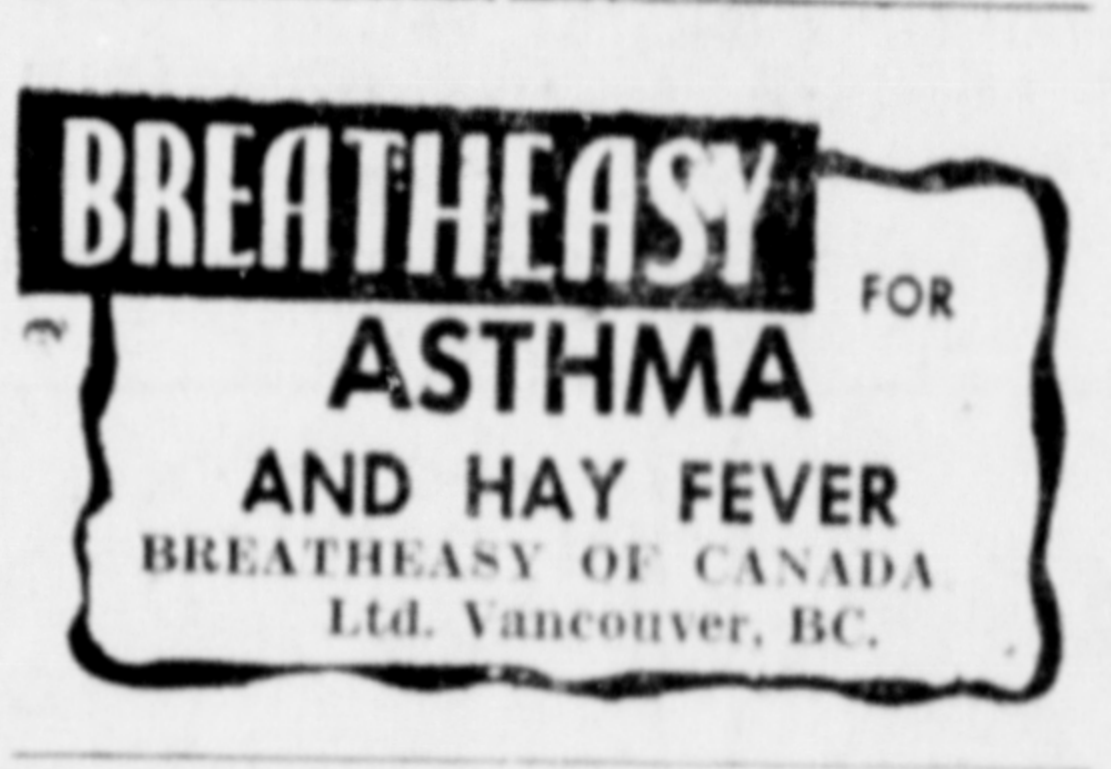
But now, this boat and this type of service is to become another relic of the past. It is very well to speak of the plane service as a substitute but those who live on the Islands and those who know them well realize that the plane does not greatly benefit Queen Charlotte or Skidegate, the most populated points. Fifteen miles of water separate these points from Sandspit and, in winter particularly, it is almost inaccessible.

In talking to those whose lives have been associated with the coming and going of the Prince John, now the Cassiar, I got a glimpse of the isolation they felt except for that schedule. Also, the indescribable feeling of loss when they said: "What will we do without it?"

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With six days to go in the Daily News carrier contest for new subscribers, Leonard Leigh is still maintaining his lead in the race for first place. If he holds that position until December 20 Leonard will become the owner of a new bicycle. He now has a point score of 245. His nearest rival is Roy Webber with 110 points.

There has been an upset in third place with John Ketcheson edging Neil Forman out of that spot. John's score of 88 tops Neil's by 17 points.

Fifth place in the contest is shared by the Daily News' only girl carrier, Marion Greenwood, and Roy Mostad, each with a score of 55 points.



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