

LIFE in this Prince Rupert

by *BIDDEE JINKS*

Last week I heard Dickens Christmas Carol—a part of it—and would be almost ashamed to admit how moved I was by it. It was better than hearing it for the first time for, like Christmas itself, its very familiarity and repetition makes it more wonderful. Somehow, I found the whole Christmas Spirit wrapped in it to the extent that I forgot how much too much there is to do between now and that twenty-fifth day of December. And was glad even that once again it had catapulted itself at us.

Of course the Cratchets were there, and I met them all again—those glad, happy people who looked at the skinny hips of an

under-fed goose and found it good because it had browned itself in their oven, and in grazing their table, belonged to them, an entire family now that Martha was home. Somehow Dickens portrays in simple style the unequalled joy of looking about the table on Christmas Day and saying, "We are all here."

Times change but that rich feeling of close kinship is the same whether the family unit is housed in a tent or framed by grandeur. At this time of year, at such times and upon such gatherings comes a special, gentle dewy rain of extra tenderness, as bright as the beams of a certain star which shone so

long ago. No family ever felt more radiant in being together again than did a certain one in Rupert on Christmas of 1911. They had arrived in June from Scotland the mother and her five little ones, and were met in Vancouver by a very proud, very happy husband and father. They came up the coast in a C.P.R. boat, arriving with the blessing of the sun upon them and added the welcome of new friends. Over the new home fluttered a flag of special welcome raised by the two partners, bachelors all, who had shared the small quarters with the father while awaiting his family and continued to share it for many months. That the flag was but a towel, none too clean, mattered not at all. It was the spirit of friendly welcome that it waited that made it more than it was.

That was in June but, in the bustle of making a home out of a bachelor's abode, with the house in the process of building, with meals to cook and water to carry, the Yuletide arrived with little warning.

Coming from the Old Land where roads were winding and beautiful and well-trodden, it was hard to get accustomed to the narrow planks that formed all paths in those days. Stepping

off just once to sink in mire to the knees justified the care with which everyone tripped through the daylight hours, and stayed home after dark unless they were well lighted.

Those evenings were a delight to look back upon, the great light that lit the way of making a new home in a new land. Whether it was wet or not, friends gathered and brought a fiddle and, if not that, then a pair of feet that could nimbly perform the intricacies of the Eightsome Reel.

But there were no cows in Rupert which meant there was no fresh milk. One child wanted milk. He did want it and he missed it with all the fervor of a small child's desire for something suddenly beyond his reach. Yet, because he saw his mother cheerfully sew by coal-oil lamp, watched older children carry wood which the fires devoured like the glutons they were, he was brave also, and eventually learned to like canned milk.

When Christmas came, the Christmas trees were all up on the mountain. Within what is now the city limits, the trees had been cut for fuel, leaving short grey stumps that, on fair days, resembled a grazing herd of sheep. And no one wanted a decorated tree badly enough to climb Mount Oldfield for one. But there was fun and parties and lots of the Christmas "spirit"—for in those days it could be had for a mere \$2 per quart.

In that home on Christmas Eve, five little children went to bed. And five handknitted stockings, brought out with them, hung limp and thin, waiting for the kind Santa who knew they now lived in Canada.

Santa filled them. There was an orange in the toe, and an apple somewhere in the middle, and around them went candies and nuts which would scatter helter-skelter in the darkness of the next early morning. And Santa smiled as each one grew lumpy and full, thankful that the boat had brought such delicacies in, and thankful too that the stairs were finally installed. For, for the past several months a stout plank with parallel cleats nailed crosswise, had stretched at a slant between the two floors, so that going upstairs was a feat that St. Nicholas himself might not have fancied. Yet, on coming down, that kindly gentleman knew he would gladly have crawled up the plank pack on back to bring the magic of Christmas time to the little ones who had made this day so joyous for himself.

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6:30—Inside Story
6:45—According to Record
6:50—Recorded Interlude
7:00—Song Festival
7:30—Organ Music
7:45—This week, Wpg.
8:00—Sat. Night Serenade
8:30—Old Time Rhythm
9:00—Saturday Night Dancing Party
9:30—Chamber Music Trio
10:00—CBC News
10:10—B.C. News
10:15—Aragon Ballroom Orch.
10:30—Harry James
11:00—Weather forecast and Sign Off

SUNDAY — P.M. —
12:00—New York Philharmonic Orch.
1:30—Church of the Air
2:00—Musical Program
2:30—CBC News
2:33—John Fisher Reports
2:45—Weed-end Review
3:00—Music for Sunday

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NOTICE is hereby given that the time for reception of tenders for "Duplex Residences for Doctors, Miller Bay, Prince Rupert, B.C." is extended to 3 p.m., Wednesday, January 7, 1948.

By order,
J. M. SOMERVILLE,
Secretary,
Department of Public Works,
OTTAWA, December 13, 1947.

SEALED TENDERS addressed to the undersigned and endorsed "Tender for Boiler House and Laundry, Miller Bay Indian Hospital, Prince Rupert, B.C." will be received until 3 p.m., Wednesday, January 14, 1948, for the construction of a Boiler House and Laundry at the Miller Bay Indian Hospital, Prince Rupert, B.C.

Plans and specification can be seen and forms of tender obtained at the offices of the chief architect, Department of Public Works, Ottawa, Ontario, the District Resident Architect, Public Building, Victoria, B.C., the Caretaker, Post Office Building, Vancouver, B.C. and the Caretaker, Post Office Building, Prince Rupert, B.C.

Tenders will not be considered unless made on the forms supplied by the Department and in accordance with the conditions as set forth there-in.

Each tender must be accompanied by a certified cheque on a chartered bank in Canada, payable to the order of the Honourable the Minister of Public Works, equal to 10 per cent of the amount of the tender, or Banker Bonds of the Dominion of Canada or of the Canadian National Railway Company and its constituent companies, unconditionally guaranteed as to principal and interest by the Dominion of Canada, or the aforementioned bonds and a certified cheque if required to make up an odd amount.

NOTE—The Department, through the Chief Architect's office, and the office of the District Resident Architect at Victoria, B.C. will supply blue-prints and specifications of the work on deposit of a sum of \$50.00, in the form of a certified bank cheque payable to the order of the Minister of Public Works. The deposit will be released on return of the blue-prints and specification within a month from the date of reception of tenders. If not returned within that period the deposit will be forfeited.

By order,
J. M. SOMERVILLE,
Secretary,
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OTTAWA, December 13, 1947.

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