

# Smithers and Burns Lake Feel the Stir of New Industrial Era

There's a thrilling stir these days among the people of Smithers and Burns Lake. Smithers, a town of more than 1500 population, nestled in the Bulkley Valley in central B.C., is beginning to feel again the fever of the old Gold Rush days.

It is the development of base-metal mines which has long been waiting, and the boom for the Bulkley Valley is beginning to feel again the fever of the old Gold Rush days.

There is a divisional point in the northern route of the trans-Canada National Highway, and is situated on Highway 16, completed in 1945 by Prince George to Prince Rupert.

Through community effort a large curling rink has been erected at Smithers and curling is a major winter sport. Outside hockey rinks are popular and the Smithers and Burns Lake Ski Clubs are well supported and active.

In the summer baseball is a favorite sport as well as tennis. Dances are held frequently then, and theatres offer additional evening entertainment.

Civic duties are administered by five commissioners and a chairman. Electric power at Smithers is supplied by a diesel plant, operated by B.C. Power Commission.

The town is serviced by the Government Telephone and Telegraph system. Four churches service the community of Smithers and Burns Lake have modern hospitals.

There are 35 retail stores, 15 garages, two machine shops, three building contractors and eight transfer companies in the district.

From the day the first settler arrived in Smithers in the wake of the fur-trader and prospector, light began to give this centre an outlet for its produce. First came the railroad, then the highway. Centrally located, it became an administration point for Dominion and provincial government departments.

But nearly always, when a gain was made, it was another town, city or district that profited first. Expansion rarely begins in the centre, but at one end or the other.

So today Smithers looks upon the opening of Columbia Cellulose pulp mill with a special significance to itself. And to the coming of Alcan to Kitimat, from which Burns Lake is already benefiting, the reaction can probably best be gauged by one old-timer, who said:

"Been holding my breath for 40 years for something like that to happen in the west. Now I'm breathing easy."

Logging in the Bulkley Valley is successful as this picture of a catfield in stooks shows. In the distance are modern farm buildings of the government experimental farm, near Smithers.

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## Message of Minister of Lands and Forests

I greatly appreciate the opportunity extended by the Daily News to convey a message to its readers on the occasion of the opening of a great new industry in Northern British Columbia.

Untold generations of conifers germinated, grew through seedling, sapling and pole stages to maturity, only to crash earthward when overcome with old age, before Prince Rupert became established as the northwestern terminus of the Canadian National Railway. For untold ages nature's bounty was wasted.

With the opening of the Columbia Cellulose Company's up-to-date plant at nearby Port Edward, the former cycle of waste effort comes to an end and the products of our fruitful river valleys and beneficial climate will be channelled into a useful course for the benefit of man and the enhancement of the modern way of life.

Many who will read this are close personal friends of many years' standing who have steadfastly maintained their faith in the great future of the northern portion of our Province. I rejoice with them in the continuing industry that gets under way today—an augury of increasingly prosperous days for Northern British Columbia. And to the newcomers whom I hope, in due course, to have the pleasure of meeting, I would convey a welcome to the fellowship and prosperity of a great community.

E. T. KENNEY.

of construction crews, the village doesn't look or feel the same. It has overnight become industry-conscious and afflicted with a fever of progress and prosperity. In the main, there will be a greater opportunity to market farm produce which is the basis of most of the town's present wealth.

Incorporated as a village in January, 1926, Vanderhoof is a distributing centre for the surrounding farming area and a shipping point for livestock from south and north.

While the village receives electrical service from the B.C. Power Commission diesel plant, immediately to the north the Nation river holds 80,000 horsepower of undeveloped hydro energy.

Since the war, population has been increasing mainly by immigration of agriculturists from Europe to form a present trading area of some 2,500.

The road work has begun at Vanderhoof and, with the influx

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## Industrial Expansion Bringing New Era to District's Agriculture

(By K. R. JAMESON, District Agriculturist)  
For many years agricultural development in Central B.C. has been slow but, with the growth of local markets due to the great industrial expansion now taking place, it is to be expected that our agricultural production will be greatly increased.

Considering the Bulkley and Skeena Valleys only, it is estimated that of the 70,750 acres now farmed, less than 20,000 acres are under cultivation. In addition, it is estimated that at least 140,000 acres of raw land is well suited to mixed farming and awaits only the coming of new settlers.

One of the main reasons why agriculture has been slow to develop in Central B.C. has been because of the many years of hard work necessary to clear a few acres of land. When a settler had only his axe and possibly a team of horses it was of necessity many years before he could clear enough land on which to make a living.

Today, farmers can no longer afford to clear land by the old laborious hand method and fortunately it is no longer necessary. In 1945 the "Farmers' Land-clearing Assistance Act" was passed by the Provincial Legislature. This act authorized the purchase of heavy, crawler type tractors equipped with cutting and piling blades to clear land for farmers and to finance the cost of clearing over a period of three years.

Land clearing operations were started in the Bulkley Valley in 1947 and continued for two years. During 1948 work was done on 62 farms between Houston and Smithers and a total of 1,148 acres was cleared. In 1949 further work was done in the Bulkley Valley and in the Terrace district. In the two years operation a total of 1,695 acres was cleared. Most of this new land is now under cultivation and increased production should soon be noticeable.

The Bulkley and Skeena Valleys are well suited by soil and climatic conditions to a program of mixed farming, and this is largely the type of agriculture that is carried on today.

In the Skeena Valley, particularly in the vicinity of Terrace, the moderate climate makes this district well suited to fruit growing and market gardening. Here the farms are much smaller than in the Bulkley but with the growing market of Prince Rupert at their doorstep, farmers in this district are able to carry on a more intensive type of agriculture than is possible farther east.

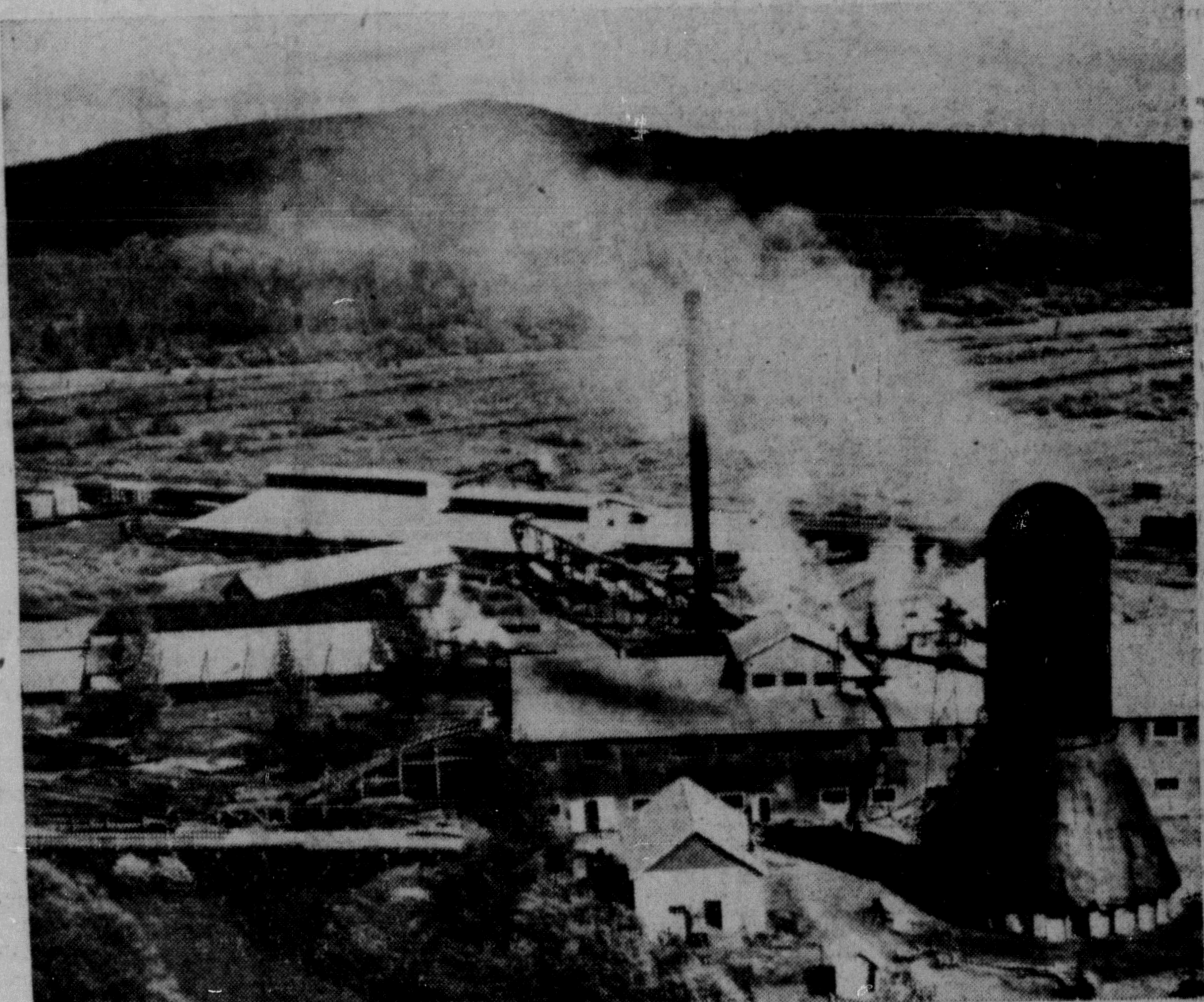
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