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Alaska Cities of the Panhandle As Seen By Prince Rupert Visitor Who Went North On Prince Henry

(By H. F. Pullen)

With attractions that bring people to the north coast from the ends of the earth, and with a steamboat service that is equal to any in the world, the Alaska Panhandle cities and villages should be visited by all Prince Rupert people, yet only a few people make the trip each year. The average Canadian of the west knows little about Prince Rupert's nearest neighbor. The cities of Ketchikan and Juneau and the other towns and villages all have their individual attractions, the Trail of '98 is a historic place of particular note but the outstanding feature of the trip is the Taku Glacier which is approached quite near by the various vessels that make the northern run.

Last week I made a brief visit to points as far as Skagway and a few brief notes on the trip will possibly prove interesting to those who have not yet made it.

There is no need to say anything about the C. N. R. steamship Prince Henry, for practically everything has already been said. The vessel is the very last word in travel and is the admiration of all who take passage on her. The service is so good that it stands out in marked contrast with services given under similar circumstances by vessels of other nations. It is difficult to imagine conditions of travel which could be more pleasing.

Ketchikan

Passengers on the ship on her last trip seemed unanimous in their statements that Ketchikan was the most up to the minute city on the route. Stepping off the ship almost into the heart of the main street the bright lights gave it a metropolitan air that was not noticeable elsewhere. Electric signs are a great attraction and they give an impression of being up to the minute just as much as does newspaper advertising. Although it was well on in the evening the shops were nearly all open with the exception of some of the groceries and other staple emporia, the people were on the streets and cars were nosing their way in every direction, driving carefully because of the narrowness of the thoroughfares and the number of people using them. Ketchikan always gives the idea that the business people are on their toes all the time and losing no oportunity to make the most of their opportunities. It claims to be the first city in Alaska and, although Juneau beats it out in permanent population, it has the advantage in summer when the fisheries are in full swing.

Just a word here as to the population of the Alaskan towns and villages. The populations were recently published and they gave Ketchikan only 3,780 but it was taken in winter and all the centres suffered, because, as is well known, Alaska is largely a place for summer residence. Many leave for the south in autumn and return in spring. They can afford to do so because Alaska is a place where money is made readily by those who apply themselves.

Before leaving Ketchikan a great many of the visitors went to look at the salmon running up the stream which passes through the heart of the city, a sight that can be seldom seen elsewhere.

It was early morning, 6 a.m. Pacific Time to be exact, when the Prince Henry entered Wrangell Narrows and for an hour and a half passed along a beautiful narrow canal where the channel is wonderfully marked by buoys. Often from the ship it would have been possible to toss an orange to a person ashore. The water was calm and the rising sun made a very beautiful picture. The pretty fishing village of Petersburg on the banks of the Narrows looked quite impressive and the whole hour and half was full of interest. Some missed it because they refused to rise early enough to see it.

Then came the piece de resistance, the real reason for the Alaska trip. It was the Taku Glacier. As the ship approached the cold wind sent most of the watchers below for their overcoats. Right up into the basin at the foot of the glacier we sailed and then for 15 minutes efforts were made to cause chunks to break off the face of the ice by giving sudden blasts on the siren. No results followed. The sun was not shining and the ice all held fast. Sound vibrations did not affect it. It was a wonderful sheet of ice. The face seemed to be about two hundred feet high, blue as fine steel, the river of ice behind it wound back into the mountain pass as far as the eye could see. Some remarked that it looked like a river that had been suddenly frozen, not realizing that it really was a river but so slow flowing that most people thought it was still.

Right alongside the glacier is the mouth of the Taku River up which a Prince Rupert firm is operating river boats to the newly discovered mining region.

Juneau

Juneau is just Juneau, the distinctive capital of the territory. It is less stirring than Ketchikan although the enumerators say it has a greater population. The federal government is erecting a fine new executive building there and there are all the federal offices and of outstanding interest, the territorial museum in charge of a priest of the Orthodox Russian Church. It is a record of efficiency and gives visitors a good idea of the ethnology and flora and fauna as well as the history of the territory. Many of the visitors were interested in seeing the original check given by the United States to Russia in payment for the territory, made for $50,200,000.

Juneau has a gold mine right in the city that employs 700 men. It is the impetus that keeps the wheels turning in the city and, as long as it continues to operate, the city will prosper. Fishing is also a considerable industry, both halibut and salmon, and the tourists leave their toll during the summer months. Just at this time it seemed as if every second shop was a curio shop but in winter the curios are retired and staples take their place.

It was in Juneau in one of the curio and art shops that some wonderful pictures of Alaska by Lawrence were seen, real interpretations of the north coast scenery, expensive but well worth the money asked. For one huge oil picture of Mount McKinley $30,000 is asked. Nothing bashful about these Alaskans!

Skagway

Skagway has the appearance of a decaying village. Its population has shrunk to a few hundreds but it is of great historic interest and its flowers are the finest in the world. It is the terminus of the White Pass and Yukon Railway, the port of entry to the Yukon Territory and Atlin but it is not particularly prosperous, judging by appearances. We went up the railway as far as Lake Bennett where once ten thousand people were encamped during the days of the gold rush but where today there is only an eating house at which we were provided with a most excellent lunch of moosemeat and trimmings. What more could one ask? We looked over the little rustic Anglican Church from which the floor has been torn, evidently to be used for other purposes.

The ride up the valley on the railway is full of historic interest. The trail over which the gold seekers trudged is plainly visible and stops were made at various points to view scenes of historic interest or to enjoy the rugged scenery. Near the summit is a monument to the horses that lost their lives in Dead Horse Gulch. It is indeed a trip not to be missed.

But the flowers of Skagway! To many these were the great attraction. Dahlias as large as dinner plates were the rule in all the gardens of this charming village. They seem to have no pests in Skagway and more than that they evidently love flowers, else they would not care for them as they do. Go to Skagway to see the flowers, if for nothing else.

But this must be the end of the article because space is limited and I have not even mentioned Soapy Smith. We called at Wrangell southbound spending a pleasant two hours visiting the famous community house of the late Chief Shake and talking to the villagers. We called again at Juneau and Ketchikan. We did what most tourists do, walked the decks, met new people, talked and danced in the evening. A real four-day holiday can be enjoyed by anyone wishing to make the famous trip up the inside passage.

Daily News "Want Ads" bring quick results.

ROTARY CLUB FAREWELL TO DONOVAN FINN

Regrets at His Departure Expressed By Member After Address By Retiring Director

Members of the Prince Rupert Rotary Club said their official farewell to Don Finn, director of the Prince Rupert Fisheries Experimental Sation, at their regular club luncheon yesterday. Mr. Finn gave an interesting address after which T. H. Johnson, on behalf of the members, expressed regret at his leaving and wished him success in his new position. Mr. Finn is to take charge of the new scientific department for the B. C. Packers with headquarters at Vancouver.

Several Rotarians were present from the Eastern States, particularly from the State of Maine and New York. S. D. Johnston presided.

In his address Mr. Finn spoke of his coming here four years ago and of his impressions at that time. He recalled the novelty of the scene. He told of a trip one Sunday when he climbed to the top of Mount Morse and said he had not known the country until that time. From the time he saw it from the top of the mountain he began to love the country, and since that the feeling had been intensified.

Dealing with his favorite subject, Mr. Finn said that science was not only the handmaiden of industry but was largely responsible for it. It was the curiosity of the discoverers that had brought about such wonderful results of late years. He was now about to turn his attention to the problem of applying knowledge to industry. Take as an example cold storage. Fundamental knowledge in regard to it was not yet available and this was necessary before it could be applied to industry. It was to tackle such problems as these that he was joining the B. C. Packers. The work would not take the place of that being done by the Fisheries Experimental Station but would supplement it. The station would be needed more and more.

The station in Prince Rupert, Mr. Finn said, was a budding institution. Today they had two new buildings with laboratories in four important departments. Progress was always slow but he felt the work being done would be of lasting benefit. A splendid lot of men were engaged in trying to solve problems that he hoped would be useful to the fishing industry.

Club's Regrets

In expressing the regret of the club at losing Mr. Finn, T. H. Johnson said that Prince Rupert would be the loser. Mr. Finn had been an ideal Rotarian and had taken an active part in the work of the club. The move would be for his financial benefit but he would still be doing work which would advance the interests of science. He hoped he would have all the good things of life.

With a good-sized list of passengers, C.N.R. steamer Prince Rupert, Capt. Edward Mabbs, arrived in port on time at 11.30 this morning from Vancouver, Powell River and Ocean Falls and sailed at 2.30 this afternoon for Anyox and Stewart, whence she will return here tomorrow evening southbound.

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