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Letters to the Editor

PORT OF PACIFIC

Elditor, Daily News: W. M. Mott, the member for New Westminster, speaking in our parliament on March 1, had this to say, as recorded on page 373 of Hansard of that date:

"I should like to say a few words about another problem that I believe faces us on the Pacific coast. It is something that should be planned for and that is our export-import trade. What are we doing or what are we going to do for the necessary facilities to handle these cargoes?"

For instance in the port of New Westminster we have nine docks. Before the war the largest number of deepsea boats that came into our port was 550 a year. We're now faced with this problem of trade that we expect will arise with the Far East—that is, with Japan and China—from which most of the trade to that port came before the war.

"I am certain that the present dock facilities in New Westminster will never be able to handle that trade and I am certain that Vancouver has not the facilities either. I mention this matter because it is something that should be planned, so the money could be loaned and we would know just where we are going."

While Mr. Mott and all the M.P.'s from lower B.C. are worrying over their ports and their monopoly on trains and Pacific sailings, Prince Rupert, which is located up the coast and 500 miles nearer Japan-China than is Vancouver, has been a huge blank in so far as overseas sailings are concerned.

While Prince Rupert has one of the three number one harbors of the world, it has a large terminal elevator which is always empty. It has a large shipbuilding plant that was to build Hays' boats which were to ply between the G.T.P. railway and the Siberian railway. But an ocean liner has never slid down the ways. Rupert has a huge floating dry dock which has never had its lifting capacity tested.

Rupert also has a standard railway and the U.S.A. government spent sixteen million dollars on the port and rail terminal, all of which was of no use to our people when the U.S. boys folded their tents.

I have already said that Rupert is 500 miles nearer Oriental points than is Vancouver and New Westminster and Mr. Mott has spoken of the 550 overseas boats docking at New Westminster but every one of those boats sailed 500 miles extra in order to pass up the port of Prince Rupert. Furthermore, a boat that makes a round trip to such a point as Hong Kong sails 1000 extra miles. Now let someone take a pencil and figure out just how many hundreds thousands of extra miles of sailing was done by Mr. Mott's 550 boats in order to swell C.P.R.'s dividends and C.N.R.'s yearly deficits. And again it is claimed that Rupert is two days' sailing time nearer Hong Kong than is Vancouver and New Westminster. By checking up on the time table it will be seen

that 48 hours would put trans-Pacific and trans-Canada traffic in Winnipeg by the time the other boat docked in the Fraser And, were it possible to procure a standard railway between the city of Prince George and Vancouver, a train could take on the passenger, mail and express traffic at boat side at Rupert and make the trip by way of Hazelton, Prince George and the new rail line to Vancouver. Now, let someone use a pencil again and figure out just how many hours of the two days extra sailing would be saved.

And yet this very thing is done on the St. Lawrence river when fast trains meet mail boats at Father Point and rush the mail in to Montreal. But they hold trans-Pacific mail on board boat two days extra in order to put that traffic on C.P.R. trains at their port at Vancouver. And the Canadian people seem quite content to have all of our nation indefinitely tied down to one overseas port on the Pacific, and that one port as far south as we can place it. Then the question surely arises—How can we build Canada up to be a great power among the nations of the world?

PAGE RIDEOUT. Peace River.

TOO MUCH PRAISE? Editor, Daily News:

To learn to play the piano is a slow process and the standard reached today is very high. It is an exquisite art and it is injurious to talk about young students as if they were at the top. Many of them are a long way from nowhere, but more than a long way from somewhere. Art is long, life is short.

Does the road wind up hill all the way? Yes, to the very end. Mr. Bligh praised some of the students here more than he did Barbara Custance, and Marie Balagno never had the praise that some of these children had. They are only touching the hem of the garment, even the best of them. It is better for them to realize this and go on patiently plodding.

Mr. Bligh told me he meant to be honest. Honesty does not consist in trying. It consists in being. M. A. V.



LEADING PIANIST—Barbara Custance of Vancouver now is recognized as one of the foremost Canadian pianists. She returns March 22 to New York's Town Hall where she made a successful debut in 1943. Her training included study in Vancouver, London and New York. In 1948 Miss Custance was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music, London, England, A.R.A.M. (Causa Honoris). (CP Photo)

Stanley Bligh and James McGrath, music and drama adjudicators during the Music and Drama Festival here for the past three days, returned to Vancouver aboard the Princess Norah Saturday afternoon. Both were very pleased with performances given during the event and hoped they would be both invited next year. Mr. McGrath will continue to Victoria from Vancouver.

Rail Rates Held Down

VANCOUVER — Business circles here said today that competition from United States carriers and inter-coastal shipping services are keeping down freight rates on many products being moved across Canada by rail.

Railway officials report that, although their lines have been allowed a 7.4 percent boost in rates, effective March 23, this will not be applied to commodity or competitive rates in force since September 1, 1949. This means that the majority of manufactured goods moving by rail from Toronto to Vancouver will continue to go under the old freight rates.

D. C. Stevenson, administrator of the Prince Rupert General Hospital, left by plane for Vancouver Saturday on hospital business. He will attend a meeting of the executive of the British Columbia Hospital Association in Vancouver this week.

Col. C. W. Peck, V.C., D.S.O., has been invited to the weekly luncheon of the Prince Rupert GYRO Club this week as guest speaker. He is coming to the city for a week's visit in connection with the opening of the new Canadian Legion headquarters.

Having driven here from Vancouver, W. Buchanan and R. Graham arrived in the city last week. They are joining the Dominion Bridge Co. crew at Watson Island to work on the erection of the digesters at the Columbia Cellulose pulp mill.

Blessed Spring Rains

WE ARE GLAD that the spring rains are here again. Particularly after our winter drought, they are something to be appreciated. Long may they continue to fall!

Blessed be the rains as their vibrant strains rise and fall in sweeping crescendos across the awakening countryside, as they strum their catchy tunes on the windowpanes and beat their drums on the roof tops.

Spring rains release the patches of winter snow and fill the creeks and brooks with wholesome laughter. They do their part in scrubbing the landscape even if they do show up our own collective and individual grime and neglectfulness.

But in spite of our spoilation of the scene, the spring rains will soon bring charm, reaching beneath the surface of the earth to coax early flowers to bloom, sprout the seed, turn the dead brown grass to green and the trees into wavy, scintillating leaf. Eventually our own shame is at least partially recovered by the northern verdure.

Meantime the rains linger on like a new melody and a lyric promising that soon from a refreshed and rejuvenated earth there will flower all the wondrous glories of another season.

Who are we to complain about the spring rains—even if they gang up the odd time with a boisterous gale? Let us all be thankful for their fresh and invigorating presence. They are one of our greatest natural assets.

CHINA DIFFICULT

TURBULENT ATTITUDE of the Chinese government is all the more difficult to understand, in that recent reports from that country indicate the new conquerors are experiencing trouble in handling their responsibilities the Victoria Times observes. Widespread famine resulting from crop failures has posed a problem that must be solved without loss of time if unrest is not to endanger the government. Economic difficulties inherent in the disruption of trade and the long-standing inflation of Chinese currency add further to the task of rehabilitation. The Moscow link apparently precludes any contacts with the West. It remains to be seen whether China can survive such treatment—whether Russia will be able to keep it up.

BETTER THAN SOME

IT'S STILL MARCH and the winter has been wicked, but a lot can be said for the Skeena Highway. Those who have just driven from Terrace to Prince Rupert this week, report the bed in good shape much of the distance is free of snow, and generally speaking, everything is pretty fair. Which is more than can be said, at this season, for thousands of roads back east.

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TONIGHT

Hear...

Hon. R. C. MacDONALD

MINISTER OF MINES AND MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

Subject...

THE IMPORTANCE OF METALS TO THE WORLD

CFPR 10:15 p.m.

LAST STRAWS

by Stevens



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