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SMITHERS VILLAGE, halfway between Prince Rupert on the coast and Prince George in central B.C., is a thriving agricultural settlement and railway divisional centre which sees a

stable future ahead. "There's no boom on here, but we're just naturally progressing," says village clerk "Happy" Turner.

'Happy' Village Clerk Sees Steady Growth for Smithers

John William (Happy) Turner, the village clerk, broke out in a big, hearty laugh, passed a hand over his bald crown and twinkled his clear blue eyes.

"Yes, sir, we gained exactly 500 people in Smithers last year. Maybe that doesn't sound like

much, but to us it's quite a surprise." Total village population today is 1,698. Twenty years ago it was 757. Reason that Happy Turner is so sure of his figures is that the municipal office conducts its own count of noses at the beginning of each year.

But "Happy" denied that there is a boom on at Smithers, a Canadian National Railways divisional centre located halfway between Prince George to the east, and Prince Rupert on the west coast.

"We're just keeping up with the natural growth that has taken over the whole of central and northern B.C."

"I figure this is a good sign. Flash-in-the-pan booms come and go, we've had them in the past. They never did us any lasting good. But our growth now is different. People are coming here not too get rich quick and get out, but to live and stay."

Main reasons for the general development, says Turner, are the Klondike development which has increased rail traffic; greater activity in local farming; and good markets for lumber, production of which reached an all-time high in 1953.

But even though Smithers like other northern towns has been "invaded" from time to time by boomers, there are still many around who came in the early days to stay.

Few, however, came as early as Happy and stayed as long. "I've been here 45 years. Came ahead of the railroad. Rode in from Ashcroft, as a matter of fact."

Happy was a homesteader—one of the earliest in the Bulkley Valley which today ranks among leading farming communities in the province. To gain capital for development of his

At the same time, increased production of the mine has raised the economic level of the whole Smithers district in providing a payroll for over 50 miners and largely increasing rail shipping.

Other mining activity has kept to the exploration stage for several reasons, principal among which are low base metal prices and lack of nearby smelting facilities.

Several properties, after considerable exploration work, did not look encouraging enough to warrant further work.

One of the most promising producers in the area is the silver-lead-zinc Cronin Mine on Cronin Mountain, reached by a 35-mile road from Smithers. One of the earliest discoveries in the district shortly after the advent of the railroad, work was resumed in 1951 and was terminated late in 1952 due, according to the company, to inability to dispose of zinc concentrates and to low prices of other base metals.

Before closing down, a mill had been set up and 3,510 tons of ore processed.

Other principal properties in the area are the gold-silver-lead-zinc mines of Duthie, Mamie and Sil Van groups held by the Sil Van Consolidated Mining and Milling Co. Ltd., Vancouver; and the silver-lead-zinc Emerald mine, held by the Emerald Glacier Mines Ltd., Burns Lake.

The latter is located on Sweeney Mountain, three miles from Tahtsa Lake and reached by a road built by the Aluminum Company of Canada Ltd.

In all, about 20 mining properties in the Smithers area had work done on them last year in varying stages. But successful mining of any but high-grade precious and semi-precious metals must await either higher base metal prices, reduction in freight rates, or smelter facilities in the north, according to engineers and promoters.

Smithers, too, looks to the Frohisher metallurgical development in the B.C.-Yukon area as an answer to its mining problems.

farm, he joined another pioneer in operating the first sawmill in the district.

The First World War interrupted Happy's farming for five years (he ended up in Syria with occupation forces of the 239th Battalion), but on his return extended his holdings and successfully raised out of noses at the beginning of each year.

Last year, the girl whom he married at the second wedding ceremony in Bulkley valley died, ending the many years of close companionship.

Happy has served the village for five years from the combined offices and council chambers in the tired-looking and sagging village hall. Besides being the clerk and treasurer, he is also: public works foreman, waterworks foreman, assessor, collector, building inspector.

Everyone in the Bulkley district either knows or has heard of Happy. Most have also heard him, and after that spontaneous peal of laughter, also know the origin of his nickname.

"Laughing just comes naturally," laughs Happy, but he has his serious moments, too, especially when he expounds the benefits of living in Smithers.

Canadian Ships To Invade Arctic

The first Canadian ships to tackle the Arctic in the summer of 1954 sailed down the St. Lawrence River the other day.

The Transport Department's northern supply vessel, C. D. Howe, sailed from Montreal, and the ice-breaker N. B. McLean from Quebec City.

Their annual invasion of the Arctic, to supply Canada's northern outposts, is labeled "Operation Nors 1."

The ships are due to return late in August.

RESEARCH COUNCIL DEVELOPS SPECIAL BAKING WHEAT

OTTAWA (CP)—The National Research Council says Canada soon may be supplying the world with a special wheat gluten which will improve the baking quality of low protein flour.

The council also said it is attempting to develop oil-producing plants to enable Canada to produce her own food oils.

"This spray dried gluten, if properly prepared, will retain its bread-baking properties and may be used to improve the baking characteristics of weak flours," the council said in a report.

Ancient Custom Develops Into Annual Celebration

An annual event with which Smithers officially heralds the coming of summer has developed into a display of pageantry and home-grown culture, which each year draws more attention across the continent.

Called the Midsummer Night's Festival, the celebration is an off-shoot of a private function by a group of "sun worshippers" who resumed an old-country custom—a sort of a wake on the night of June 21, longest day of the year, accompanied by a sun dance.

The present festival is a combined international folk-festival, music and drama show, for which local talent enters elimination contests in the spring each year.

Main instigator and promoter of the event is T. J. Then, formerly of Poland who operates the Lunan farm, and is one of the original sun dancers of Smithers. The annual display is held on his farm, in a natural amphitheatre located on a meadow near the Bulkley river.

The snow-covered Hudson Bay mountain peaks form a dramatic background. The festival ends with a glitzy display of fireworks.

forms of recreation and

Farmers Needed to Meet Markets

Bulkley Valley farmers' hopes to supply an increasing northern and central B.C. market to the west depend on "at least 50 per cent increase in production," according to agricultural experts.

The Bulkley Valley, which stretches from Rose Lake in the east to Hazelton in the west—a distance of 100 miles—and is about 15 miles across at its widest, comprises a total of 600,000 acres of arable land.

From the main crop of hay in the early days of horse-log-ging, today's production is centred around dairying and mixed farming and root crops.

But few farmers have taken agriculture seriously until recently, say Ken Jameson, district provincial agriculturalist, and Walter Burns, dominion experimental substation superintendent.

IN THE WOODS

"There has been too much wealth in the woods where our farmers have been spending most of their time," says Mr. Burns.

Smithers ranks among the top producers of lumber among interior centres, with an annual cut of 10,000,000 board feet.

"But most of the accessible timber has been depleted and small operators will have to return to their farms for their main income in the future," said Mr. Burns, who feels "this is a good thing."

"There is a good market for farm and dairy produce today in Prince Rupert, with more markets opening at Kitimat. Bulkley Valley farmers are the most natural suppliers of such products which they can grow successfully."

But another development must parallel increased production, said Mr. Burns. A central grading and distributing station

VICTORIA (CP)—Gordon Gibson (L-Lillooet) highlighted the B.C. legislature's discussions on conservation recently by suggesting that the government change its policy to allow increased cutting in forests.

Mr. Gibson said his suggestion was based on the fact that more trees are dying than are being cut down. He quoted Forests Minister R. E. Sommers as having said 5,000,000,000 board feet of timber was cut in 1953, while 10,000,000,000 feet are dying each year.

If the province's timber cut could be raised by 5,000,000 feet, Mr. Gibson said, the cut would last for at least 40 years.

He called on the government to reduce stumpage charges so that the market price of timber could be cut, thereby opening up markets for B.C. timber across the continent.

At the same time, several members of the opposition requested a full-scale inquiry into the province's forest industry. Dealing with another subject, Cyril Shelford (SC-Omineca) asked the government to require private companies given water rights in any area to supply the surrounding area with electric power.

RUPERT'S DESTINY

(Continued from Page 4)

the city's 20,000 horse-power capacity, a land air base to augment the seaplane base, extended shipping facilities, and highway paving are some of the new developments in the offing expected to attract more primary and secondary industry.

Meanwhile, Prince Rupert remains the "Gateway to the Pacific Northwest"—a natural shipping outlet for the products of B.C.'s northland, from the Peace River to the Alaskan Panhandle.

But to realize its natural destiny, Prince Rupert needs more than natural resources and a wonderful harbor—it needs attention.

Ancient Splendor To Be Recorded

Medieval Paris, in all the splendor of centuries-old street parades and spectacular Passion plays, will be recreated in the French capital this summer.

Under the brooding grey-stone towers of old Notre Dame, near winding alleys where Francois Villon wrote and rowdied, the middle-ages spectacle, "Le Vray Mystere de la Passion" (Ye True Mystery of ye Passion) will be presented from June 26 to July 11.

It will be the climax of three highlights of the Paris spring-summer season.

must be operated by farmers who look towards commercial outlets on a large scale.

Promotion of such a centre has been one of the main projects of Smithers District Chamber of Commerce and government agricultural men. Response of farmers, however, has been indifferent, generally.

"We need a few more farmers here with scientific knowledge who want to make a business out of agriculture," say the experts.

Considerable progress, however, has been made in recent years. For instance, Bulkley Valley Milk Producers' Association supply a major part of Prince Rupert's fresh milk consumption, and such crops as carrots and potatoes are being marketed in Prince Rupert in bulk form by a limited number of growers.

"COMFORTABLE" LOT

But even though only a few of the 500 farmers concentrated around Smithers "specialize" their lot on the whole "is comfortable and pleasant." They

raise beef cattle, milk cows, chickens and pigs for their own consumption and for sale. Feed for stock is grown in the summer, but good grazing land is scarce.

Opportunity for new farmers "is very good." Developed farms of around 360 acres, including dwellings, can be purchased for about \$50 an acre. Initial capital required to start successful farming is around \$6,000, according to Mr. Jameson, agriculturalist. Minimum acreage required is two quarter-sections with 100 acres under cultivation.

Several thousand acres of raw Crown land is still available, ranging from \$2.50 to \$5 an acre. But clearing costs are high, around \$40 an acre for wooded land.

"For anyone who has a flourish for rural life, likes a warm dry climate in the summer and snow in the winter, Smithers is one of the finest places I know of to go farming."

That's the way one farmer puts it. He's been there for 35 years and figures he should know.

other central B.C. areas and contains only scattered quantities of saw-log lumber.

But the quantity of medium-sized, limb-free cedar has made it highly profitable for operators to specialize in cedar poles, used throughout the continent for telephone and power lines.

Private operators, running small shows and employing about six men, have done well in the pole business in post-war years. Prices were good and markets plentiful. The poles are cut during the fall and winter months and hauled to market before break-up, before the roads turn soft.

Because good roads are necessary to haul the heavy loads, many have been pushed by bulldozers into the 3,000 acres being logged.

These roads have also helped the sparsely settled farmers in the district, many of whom have turned to logging during the winter months—a combination which is practised throughout

Although the Hazelton lowlands are heavily wooded, size of timber is small compared to

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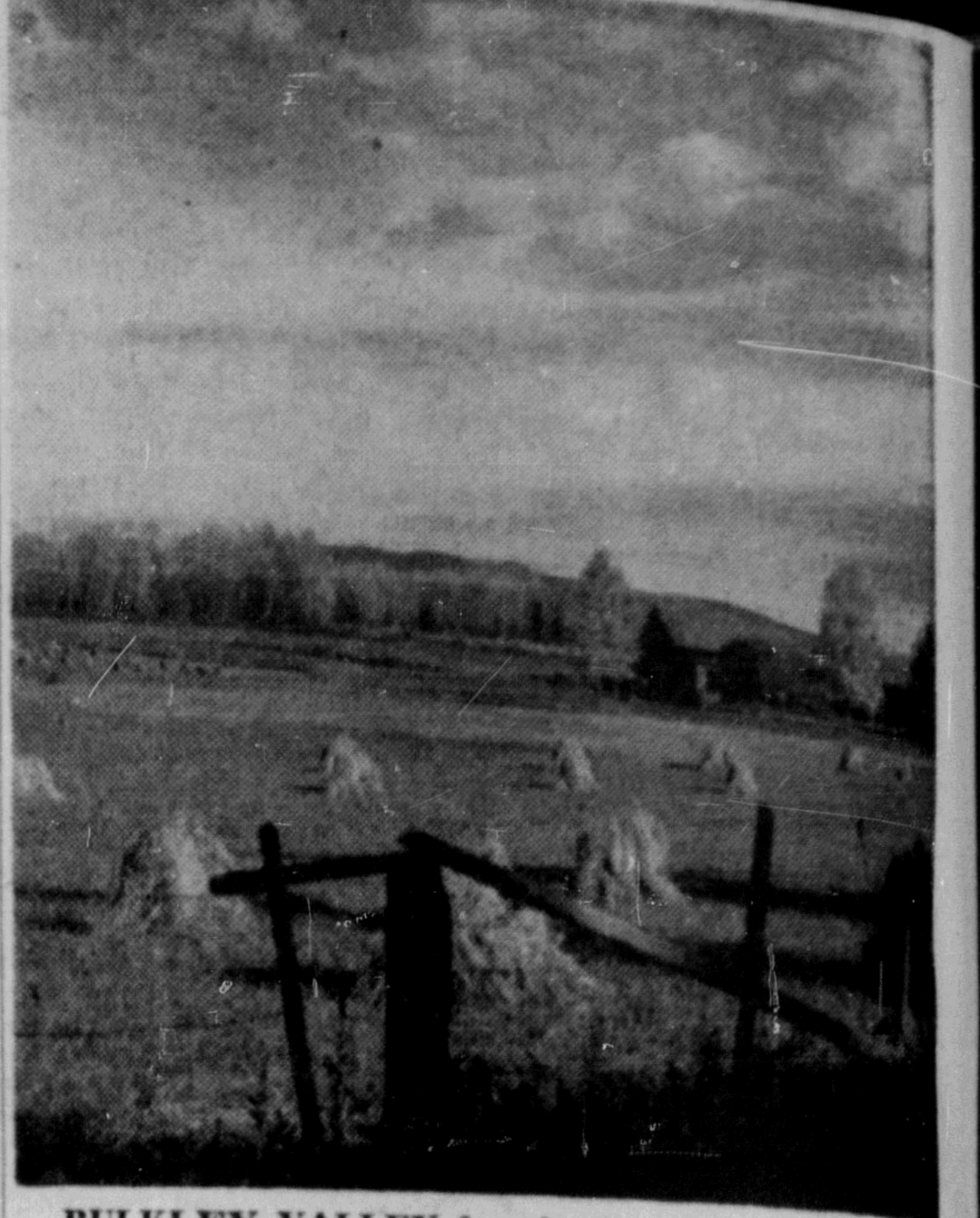
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BULKLEY VALLEY farmland produces good crops and plays a major part in the economy of valley residents, most of whom are at least part-time farmers who augment their income with logging.

central B.C. on a large scale—long feet of poles and piling hood. Total woods production in sawn lumber by six mills.

Hazelton in 1953 was 700,000 and 1,732,738 board feet of

The Bulkley Valley

From Topley to Moricetown, including SMITHERS — TELKWA — HOUSTON

FARMING—Thriving farms produce varied crops in this largest agricultural area in North Central B.C. Growing markets at Prince Rupert and Kitimat are not yet being supplied. Organized production, grading and marketing of livestock, dairy, poultry and farm produce on a larger scale is being encouraged. Over 200,000 acres of arable and summer pasture land are still available.

LUMBERING—Forest production is a large part of the present economy of the district.

MINING—Sporadic attempts have been made at development of numerous mineral deposits. Coal is shipped from Telkwa to Prince Rupert.

HUNTING AND FISHING—Excellent.

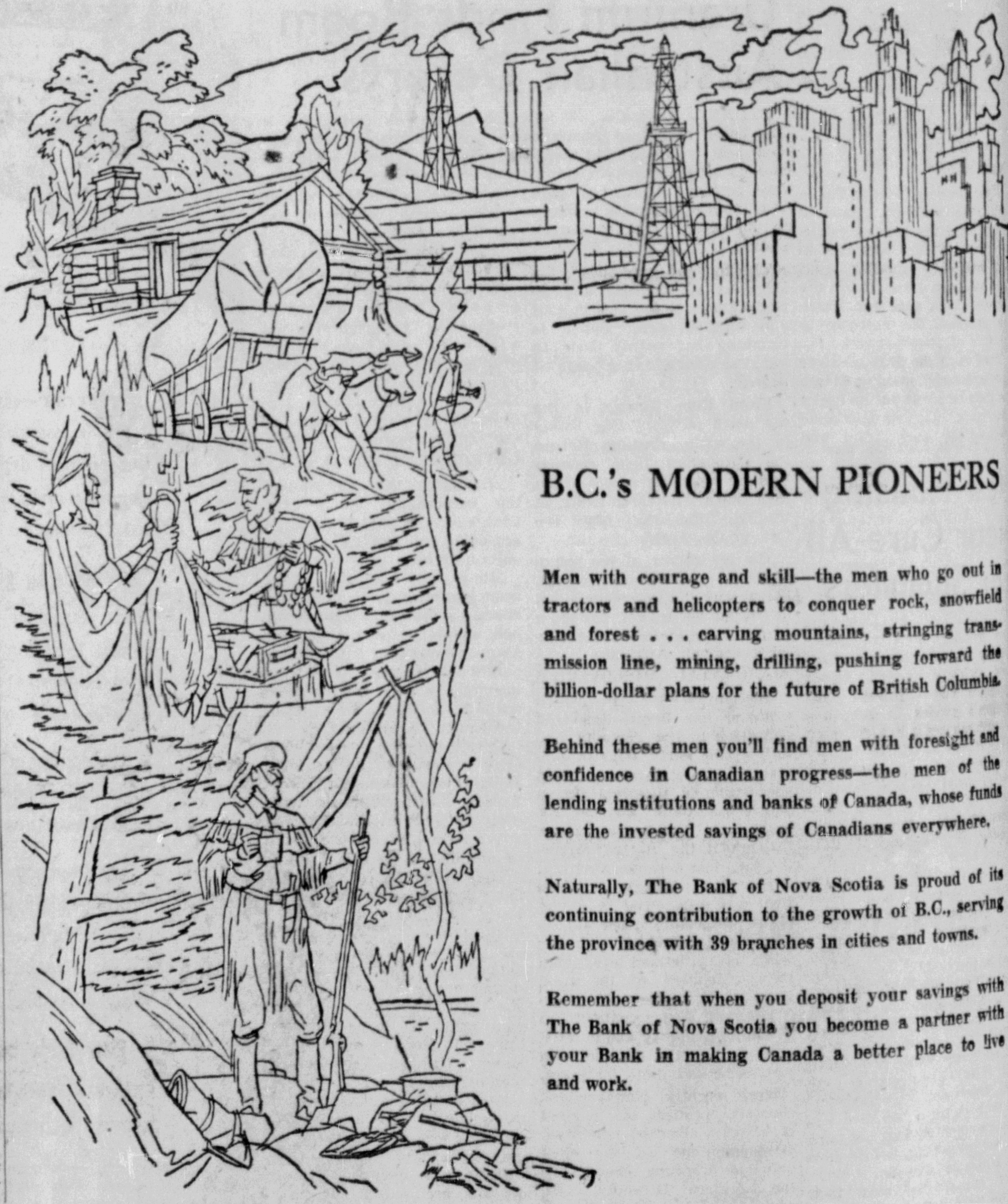
TRANSPORTATION—The Canadian National Railways, the Northern Trans-Provincial Highway No. 16 and Canadian Pacific Airlines serve the Bulkley Valley.

POWER—B.C. Power Commission provides electrical service to the 3 main centres and some rural areas. Further rural electrification is being sought.

CLIMATE—Moderate, with annual rainfall about 18 inches. It is generally conducive to comfortable living and good crops.

Smithers & District Chamber of Commerce

A. N. DANDO, Telkwa, President. GEO. KIDD, Smithers, Secretary.



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