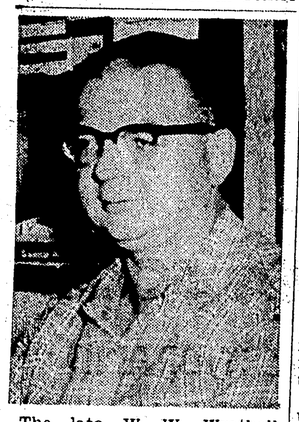
Longtime Rupert furniture dealer pays tribute to early pioneers

It is fitting that tribute should be paid to our early pioneers at this time, Alex MacKenzie, longtime furniture dealer in Prince Rupert said this week.



The late W. W. Wrathall, founder of Wrathall's Photo Finishing began his career when he was ten years old. A box camera loomed large in the eyes of a youngster in those days and he found a way of acquiring one. By selling so many packets of needles he would be rewarded with a camera, 1894 style.

History records that he ended up with a camera but his mother bought most of the needles!

Wrathall's began life as a stationery store on Second Avenue in 1914 with photography as a sideline. It wasn't until 1925 that photography became its main business. John R. and his sister Vivian present owners, also got an early start at photography. Both worked in their father's shop after school and in holidays Jack entered the business in 1925.

Jack and his sister, who had since married Mrs. John Comadina became co-owners in 1948.

Wrathall's has moved around, first on Second Avenue, later on Third Avenue where the Broadway Cafe now is and then directly across the street. Last stop before the new building where they are now was on Third Avenue where the Shop-Easy store is located.

Before coming to Prince Rupert in the early days W. W. Wrathall was a telegraph operator at Hazelton and made his first trip up the Skeena in a canoe because he had missed the river boat.

Mr. MacKenzie, who arrived here May 10, 1910 said that he arrived in the embryo city in the midst of the town's first election.

"Most of the early settlers came to work in Prince Rupert in connection with the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway which was building from Prince Rupert eastward and from eastern Canada westward."

By the time Mr. MacKenzie arrived in the city many improvements had taken place, "the water supply and some sewers were in and streets were built of 2 by 12-inch planking raised from the ground on trestles."

The city maintained a crew of carpenters to keep streets in repair, Mr. MacKenzie said. He recalls it wasn't until 1921 that this order began to change.

Trestles were taken down and used as fill or burned. Crews began to build streets and sidewalks. Even as late as the 1930's wooden sidewalks were common where the furniture store is now located.

"From the start Prince Rupert had able administrators, and although we have had our ups and downs, we still made progress, although not quite as envisioned by early pioneers."

Thirty three years of distributing goods and services has seen a great change from the early days when there was no eastward transportation except by riverboat. At that time the river boats were the only means of transporting men and materials to the camps along the Skeena River.

It was during this time the railway was hacking a right of way out of solid rock eastward, mostly by hand.

The trade of the city, at that time was mainly from railway workers, contractors and people in connection with railway.

Mr. MacKenzie pointed out "that a severe blow was struck the struggling city when the "unsinkable" Titanic struck an iceberg in the Atlantic and sank." Charles M. Hays, president of the Grand Trunk Pacific went down with the ship.

"Finally however the railway was completed and the first train from the east arrived in Prince Rupert in the spring of 1914."

Mr. MacKenzie has been in business at the same place on Third Avenue for 33 years. In February, 1923, he married Elizabeth Thomas at the old Presbyterian Church on Fourth Avenue. They have one son, Hugh, also of Prince Rupert, and a daughter Elspeth, Mrs. Keith of Kitimat, and four grandchildren.

THE CITIZENS were thanked today by the Junior Chamber of Commerce for their co-operation and assistance by President Robert Whitely.

"Prince Rpuert is a wonderful place to live, is it any wonder we are proud of it?"

Mr. Whitely said that since 1934 the Jaycees have been training the young men of this city to be leaders in their own fields and the field of civic responsibility.

He said that through the years Prince Rupert Jaycees have encouraged traffic safety, youth development, beautification, fellowship and good citizenship.

"Every assurance can be given that as Prince Rupert grows, the Jaycees will grow with it and continue to maintain the civic pride that this city has today."

Bert Morgan brought name of store here

HERBERT MORGAN SR., of the Grotto Tobacco Company brought the name with him when he came to Prince Rupert in 1921. The original Grotto was in operation in the 600 block of Granville Street in Vancouver. Reports of the opportunities and openings in the north lured Bert Morgan to Prince Rupert and as he says "I'm still in business!"

Prince Rupert had all the earmarks of progress when he arrived and the much touted " all red route" for silk shipments to Montreal was the talk of the day.

There was enthusiastic sporting element in the city when Mr. Morgan arrived. Baseball, basketball and football with competition from Stewart, Anyox and Ketchikan kept sports fans happy.

Mr. Morgan is former president of the Football Association and says he is still keenly interested in sports but he doesn't take such an active part anymore. He is also a past president of the Retail Merchants Association.

The building in which the Grotto is located was built in 1910, the year of Prince Rupert's Incorporation.

BONUS CATCH

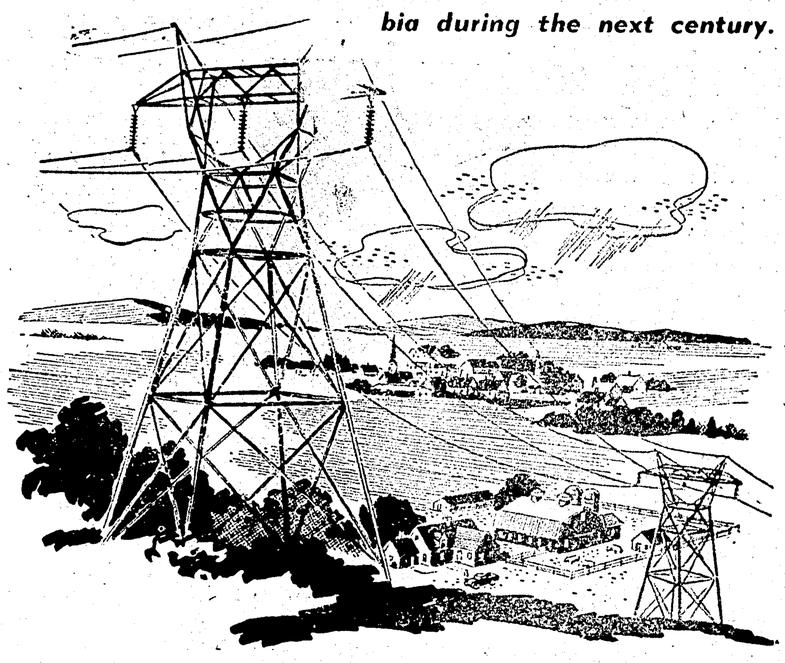
CRANBROOK, B.C. (CP)— Most anglers would be happy with the catch in the upper Elk river area on opening day this year: 62 fishermen caught 593 cutthroat and 30 Dolly Varden. But biologists say this was not up to their expectations.

SERVING YOU FOR 30 YEARS
WITH ELECTRIC POWER
...PACE SETTER FOR B.C. PROGRESS

Saluting the Pioneers of B.C.'s Centennial.

We look forward to serving the continually growing needs of Electrical Power in Northern British Columbia during the next century.

"Mr. Reddiwatt"



★ ELECTRICAL WIRING
★ REFRIGERATION
★ ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES
★ SALES & SERVICE

Phone 4210

NORTHERN B.C. POWER Co. Ltd.

Besner Block
Prince Rupert, B.C.

& Stewart
Phone 4210

Discover beautiful British Columbia this Centennial year!

Tour Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast - explore your Pacific frontier!

See the Parliament Buildings, Butchart Gardens, Thunderbird Park in Victoria. Head up-Island to friendly resorts, fabulous fishing spots at Parksville, Qualicum Beach, Campbell River. Take steamer trips up the B.C. coast, too!

Vacation in Vancouver and tour the Fraser Valley, too!

Take in Vancouver's beautiful beaches, parks and playgrounds. Enjoy "Theatre Under The Stars", Chinatown, shopping, chairlifts, hiking. In the Fraser Valley, see the hot springs at Harrison, the Fair at Chilliwack.

Come to the Kootenays for the grandeur and the glories of an unspoiled vacationland!

Hunt and fish amid snow-capped mountains, lakes and streams. Take your pick of picnic and camp sites, hotels and motels. Explore Kootenay National Park, enjoy pageants and plays, barbecues and bonspiels from Trail to Golden!

Enjoy every adventure under the sun in the Okanagan and South Central B.C.!

Thrill to scenic splendors from roaring river canyons to blossom-carpeted valleys. Fish lovely lakes – relax on white-sand beaches. And have the time of your life at special Centennial parties in every city, town and village you visit!

Roam the romantic Cariboo and see the West as it was!

See old coaches, old trail hotels and old-timers in a setting of rolling range and sagebrush. Stay in hotels, motels, dude ranches and real ranches. And have fun at parades and picnics, fairs and rodeos wherever you go in B.C.'s romantic Old West!

Take a trip to the future - head north to Peace River and the Totem Route!

In this last frontier of mighty mountains, forests, plains and waterways, see the names in the news – Dawson Creek Fort St. John, Burns Lake, Prince Rupert. And enjoy Canada's finest hunting and fishing, as well as salmon barbecues, canoe races, Indian ceremonies!

Wherever you go on your British Columbia Centennial Year vacation, special ceremonies and celebrations have been planned for your added pleasure! Check with this newspaper for the newest programme of events in every part of the Province! **B.C. CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE**