North's transportation hub, city goal

Boom in Rupert economy seen when airport, marine highway to Alaska come into being

Prince Rupert is living up to its old triumphs and anticipating greater ones as it celebrates the 50th anniversary of its incorporation and welcomes delegates to the 29th annual convention of the Associated Boards of Trade of Central British Columbia and Associated Alaskan Chambers of Commerce.

Known for nearly half a century as the halibut capital of the world, now the home of a money-making pulp mill, Prince Rupert has set its sights on becoming a major transportation centre of the north Pacific coast.

With the competion of the city's new $10,000,000 airport with its 6,000-foot runway on Digby Island in 1961, Vancouver will be slightly more than two hours away by Canadian Pacific Airlines. Representations have already been made to CPA to link its east-west services with Prince Rupert.

When the proposed multi-million dollar marine highway system to Alaska comes into being, Prince Rupert should become a key stopping off place for thousands of American and Canadian tourists.

Once the ferry-link is completed between Prince Rupert, Ketchikan, Wrangell, Petersburg, Juneau and Skagway tourists will be able to make a circle tour of northern British Columbia and Alaska.

They will be able to drive their car and trailers up Highway 97 from the United States border, turn west at Prince George on Highway 16, sail aboard ocean-going ferries to Skagway, drive up the Haines cutoff to the Alaska Highway, drive down the Alaska Highway to Dawson Creek and drive down Highway 97 again via Prince George.

As a gateway to Alaska, tourism can become a major part of Prince Rupert life. In 1959 tourism brought in excess of $100,000,000 to the economy of Alaska.

The City of Prince Rupert and the Prince Rupert Chamber of Commerce believe that as the Canadian terminal of the marine highway, Prince Rupert can play a major role in the tourist life of northern British Columbia and Alaska.

In keeping with the prospect of the marine highway to Alaska, the British Columbia government has pledged a road to the wharf, the Canadian National Railways has agreed to reserve a site in its dock area for a ferry landing slip and the federal government has promised its complete support.

Being rushed to completion is the other vital facet of Prince Rupert's role as a major transportation centre, the city's airport on Digby Island, across the harbor from the city waterfront.

Contractors are now at work on the clearing for the power line to the 6,000 foot runway, and Transport Minister George Hees has assured the Chamber of Commerce that all remaining projects such as the runway lighting, navigational aids, instrument landing signals, radio buildings, hazard beacon will be completed this year, with the terminal building to be finished in the spring of 1961. The runway and parking aprons were completed in midsummer of 1959, almost a year ahead of schedule.

Incorporated on March 10, 1910 as the terminal of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, the death of Charles M. Hays on the Titantic in 1912 quashed grandoise plans for Prince Rupert's future. Fishing became the major industry and last year a total of 80,559,505 pounds of salmon, halibut, flatfish and shell fish were landed here for a value of $4,602,215 to fishermen.

Combined value of troll and net salmon was $1,236,727 while halibut landings were valued at $2,686,172.

Last year Columbia Cellulose Company, Limited's acetate pulp mill at Watson Island, 11 miles from here, had its best year to date with record sales of $26,130,815 and a net profit of $2,904,768. Pulp production reached 400 tons a day, more than twice the initial production when the mill was established here in 1951. A major factor in the city's stability, the mill now employs more than 700 persons.

Expected to boost the city's economy is the $400.000 Prince Rupert Sawmills Ltd., plant scheduled to go into production next week.

For the past two weeks test runs have been made in the 280 feet by 80 foot building with logs put through the machinery and all other equipment given trial runs. The huge 120-foot sawdust burner was given tests Tuesday and Wednesday of this week.

The mill is slated to produce between 175,000 and 200,000 board feet per eight-hour shift with a yearly capacity estimated at 25,000,000 board feet based on a single shift operation.

A recent announcement stated that in the immediate future the new plant plans to install a barker and chipper to produce pulp chips from pulp and waste timber.

Construction figures for last tinues to climb although not as quickly as in 1959.

Construction figuures for last year rose past the million and a half-dollar mark with a record 414 building permits being issued valued at $1,648,414. A total of $868,600 of this figure was for new homes.

This year's six month total is $491,960 compared to $976,416 at the same time last year.

Completed last year were the city's new $99,511 firehall, the $250,000 Civic Centre indoor swimming pool, a new $625,000 senior high school and a $100,000 elementary school.

Already completed and opened this year is a new $75,000 Canadian National Telegraphs building.

Looking ahead, the City of Prince Rupert has purchased the federal government building for $200,000 to renovate it as a new city hall. The building will replace the old city hall built in 1912.

The City is already launched on the second phase of its $1,643,000 sewer extention and renovation program and as a result the city's three-year reconstruction and paving program has been interrupted.

Under the original three-year street reconstruction program every street within the city limits was scheduled to be paved by 1960 with the exception of the Mink Ranch road.

Even now, however, Prince Rupert has more paved streets on a per capita basis than any other city in Canada.

Also planned for construction in the near future is a $193,000 senior citizens housing project, down payment for which was pledged by the Rotary and Gyro clubs, the Canadian Legion Branch 27, United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union, the Business and Professional Women of Prince Rupert, the Fishermen's Co-Operative Credit Union and City Council.

Well under construction, with the main walls erected, is a new Canadian Bank of Commerce building on Third Avenue West.

A six-year program of street lighting renewal at an annual cost of $46,787 is due to start shortly.

Also attesting to the prosperity of the city is the fact that there is a car for every four men, women and children in the city. Motor Vehicle Branch statistics show this year more than 2,500 cars have been registered, already more than last year's passenger car total of 2,445. The total for passenger and commercial vehicles is well over the 3,100 mark.

While the city is currently celebrating its 50th birthday with a week of festivities that continues until Saturday, along with the revival of the Northern British Columbia Exhibition, a Golden Jubilee Ball was held on March 10 of this year, the actual anniversary of the city's incorporation half a century ago.

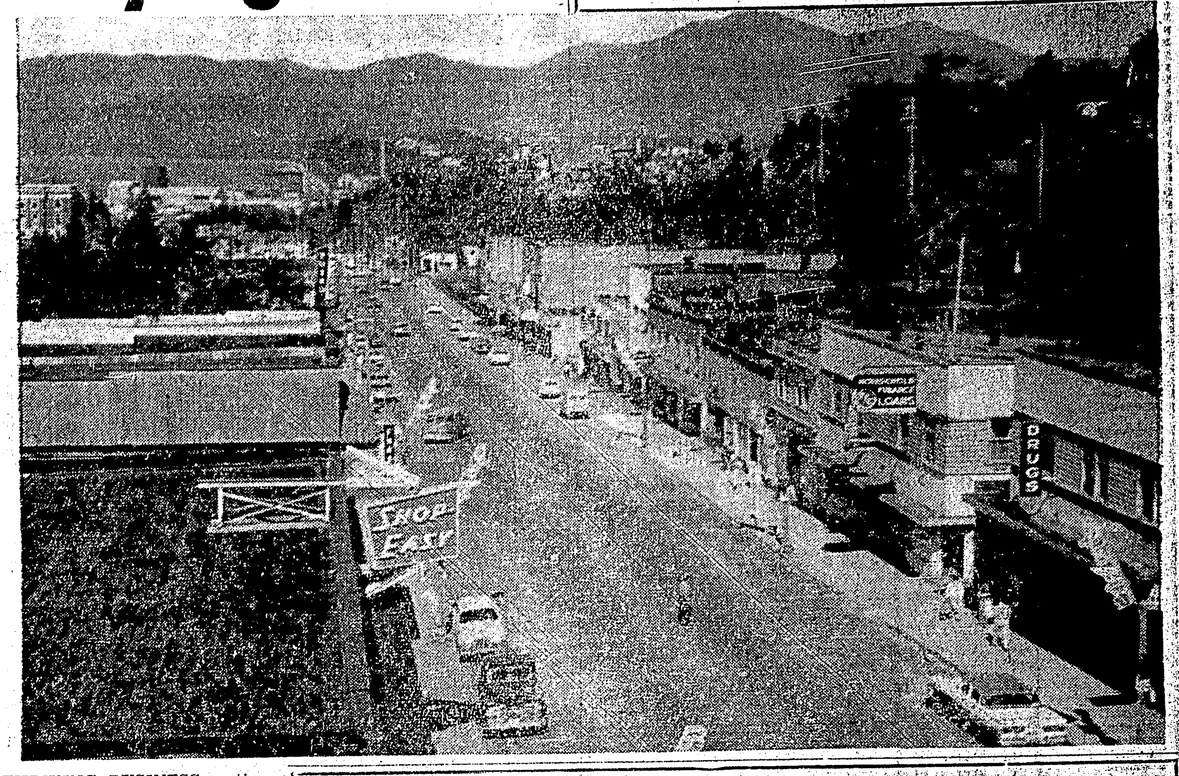
At the Golden Jubilee Ball, the Chamber of Commerce and Junior Chamber of Commerce presented the city with an official chain of office and robes for the city's mayors. Mayor P. J. Lester accepted them for the city.

Throughout the year the Jubilee Committee has provided trophies for various events, the Capital to Capital International Cruiser race, district soccer tournament, baseball tournament, badminton tournament and two bonspiels.

The city today is a far cry from the insolvent town of the depression days when Prince Rupert went into receivership and was placed under the jurisdiction of Commissioner W. J. Alder.

It has been a city of fluctuating fortunes, a boom town in 1910, it built ships duuring the First and Second World Wars, went broke during the hungry 30s, paid its debts, came back again, lost its drydock to Seattle when the Canadian National Railways sold it because of mounting subsidies, became stable with the arrival of Columbia Cellulose Company, Limited and is now on the upswing again, borne onward by the eternal optimism of its residents.

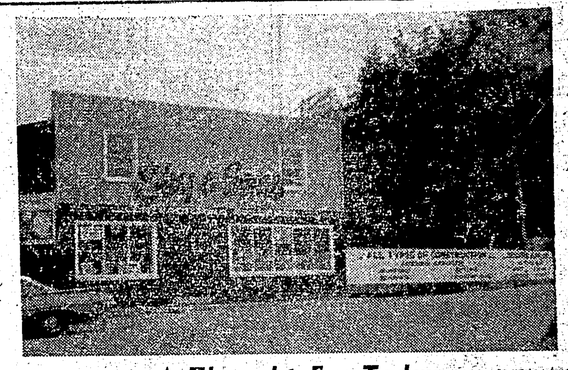
All in all, the city is not only celebrating its golden jubilee but so far as its economy and prosperity are concerned, believes it is embarking on a golden era tied in with the ever-expanding development of northern British Columbia and Alaska.



THRIVING BUSINESS section of Prince Rupert is depicted above in photo of Third Avenue West looking east toward new $400,000 Prince Rupert Sawmills Ltd., plant, whose big sawdust burner can be seen to right of court house. City is host today, Friday and Saturday to delegates attending the 29th annual convention of the Associated Boards of Trade of Central British Columbia and Associated Alaskan Chambers of Commerce. Full program of activities has been lined up for the expected 500 delegates.

—Staff photo by Gary Oakes.

HOST FOR 29th ANNUAL convention of the Associated Boards of Trade of Central British Columbia and Associated Alaskan Chambers of Commerce is John Guthrie, president of the Prince Rupert Chamber of Commerce and mill manager of the Columbia Cellulose Company, Limited. Mr. Guthrie was elected this year succeeding Dr. L. M. Greene. Raised in Ladysmith, Vancouver Island, Mr. Guthrie obtained his BA and MA at the University of British Columbia. He joined the pulp and paper industry in 1940 with Alaska Pine and Cellulose Limited, was superintendent at Woodfibre from 1943 to 1951 and was manager at Woodfibre and at Port Alice until he accepted the position as mill manager with Columbia Cellulose at Prince Rupert in April, 1957. He is a member of the Association of Professional Engineers.



GREETINGS and BEST WISHES TO THE ASSOCIATED BOARDS OF TRADE CONVENTION

A Thought For Today —

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