



DAWSON CREEK has become a bustling centre of more than 6,000 persons since its incorporation in 1934. Supply centre for the vast agricultural area of B.C.'s Peace River country, Dawson Creek is also surrounded by large nat-

Much Open Land Still Available In B.C.'s Peace River Country

Rapid expansion of agricultural development in the Peace River area of British Columbia is shown in production figures, which have doubled in the last few years.

But there is still room for increased settlement and development of the 3,500,000 acres of range and arable farming land. To date only 1,200,000 acres are occupied of which 300,000 are under cultivation.

Another 500,000 acres are untouched in the Fort Nelson vicinity, 300 miles north of the Peace.

Total grain production figures for 1953, supplied by A. M. Johnson, district agriculturist at Dawson Creek, are highest in the history of the Peace.

Wheat yielded at average of 20 bushels to the acre for a crop of 1,650,000 bushels; barley, at 35, totalled 2,100,000 and oats, biggest producer, yielded 2,475,000 bushels.

Dawson Creek, as the centre of the main grain producing area, is the greatest initial grain shipping point in the British Empire, disposing of more than four million bushels through its nine elevators.

Recently, growing of forage crops for seed has hit a peak, with Creeping Red Fescue leading the list in production and financial returns.

One farm last year, with 1,500 acres seeded, grossed \$250,000.

Besides crop production, cattle ranching and mixed farming are fast gaining market attention, but here, too, says the district agriculturist, is much room for expansion.

Total return from sale of hogs, lambs and cattle exported from the district and shipped from Dawson Creek was more than \$1,000,000 in 1953—not including the large number of animals butchered for local consumption.

And on the heels of these figures comes an offer from Alaska distributors to buy prime Peace River beef and pork, poultry and eggs, and fresh milk.

Farmers and ranchers, studying the vast but scattered markets of the far north, believe greater production is necessary

to fill the demand. But the opportunity is there, they say, looking upon the Alaska Highway as their market gateway to Alaska and the Yukon.

Meanwhile, a new 50 by 50-foot steel and aluminum apiary which houses 3,000 colonies of bees, erected recently, illustrates the success of another branch of agriculture. Several carloads of high-grade honey were shipped last year.

CLIMATE

The climate of the Peace River area is continental, with an all-over average of 18 inches of precipitation annually. About two inches a month falls during the growing season. Average annual snowfall is 50 inches. The average mean temperature in the winter varies between 4 and 7 degrees and in the summer between 58 and 60.

Frost-free days vary with elevation of different areas, running from 20 days to 123 days, but the more typical are 65 to 70 in the valleys and 97 to 106 on the plateaus.

Hail, although not unknown in the area, does not fall severely enough to cause serious damage. Spring tillage does not start until early in May, but by the end of August harvesting is well under way.

SOILS

Soils fall into two main divisions. Northern thin black and Northern grey-wooded. The former, developed under grassland conditions, occurs chiefly in the Fort St. John and Dawson Creek vicinities. The choice farm lands fall in this division.

Most of the farm and ranchlands still available fall into the grey-wooded soil division, much of it broken up by thinly wooded areas, natural meadows and grassy plateaus.

While Dawson Creek with its 6,000 population is the major town of the area, followed by Fort St. John, 40 miles to the north, the little village of Pouce Coupe, near the Alberta boundary, is host to the provincial government offices.

Pouce Coupe still bears this distinction because it was the first settlement in the area to be incorporated, although it has grown little since that year of 1932. Population today is about 500.

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NATURAL GAS

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tials, and millions of tons of coal.

That is why the B.C. government is ready to stake the future of the province on development in the north and preparing to spend multi-millions on such enterprises as extension of its Pacific Great Eastern Railway into the Peace River.

That is why, too, the whole northland of B.C. and the Yukon Territory stands poised on the threshold of a new empire—a glittering, exciting, industrial empire.

Pioneer Rancher Still Holds Nags In High Esteem

FORT ST. JOHN—Although he may be grasping the wheel of a late model sedan, Lynch Callison, address Northern B.C., is likely to say on reaching his destination: "Let's head up this draw and rein up."

Pioneer rancher and packer of British Columbia's Peace River area, Callison still has high opinions of pack horses, in spite of modern-day bulldozers and even helicopters.

And each year he proves the point by putting to use his 100-horse string packing supplies for mining and oil exploration units, or survey parties.

At present he is negotiating for a major contract to supply road building crews this summer in the Cassiar district. When interviewed, he was on his way to Vancouver to discuss the project. It will be his first visit in 20 years.

"Horses are necessary in this country. They helped open up the Peace River in the first place. They helped build the Alaska Highway, and we're not done with 'em yet," says Callison, who doesn't look anywhere near his 57 years.

"Horses can pick a trail where nothing else can go, and pack a load at the same time. They don't need gas or oil. They can feed right on the job."

Callison was born and raised on a Montana ranch. He was 13 when he rode into Canada with his father and brother. In 1913 the trio trekked into the Peace River over 400-mile Edson Trail, began ranching and raising horses.

An 11-section ranch, on which Callison grazes 100 head of cattle and his select cayuses, is located near Fort St. John. His remaining horses are grazed between here and the Yukon border.

Brother Leisch operates a tourist lodge near the Toad River on the Alaska Highway. He wrestled a female grizzly last fall while guiding a group of big-game hunters. Came out of the scrape with lacerations.

Lynch claims he has made and lost two major fortunes during his freighting career.

A deeper tragedy struck several years ago when he lost his two children in a fire which destroyed his ranch buildings. Today he is raising a new family and beams on his four-year-old son, and daughter, aged six.

NEW TELEPHONE

(Continued from Page 19)

500-mile chain of Very High Frequency (VHF) radiotelephone relay stations which stretches from Vancouver to Prince George via the Fraser Canyon and the Cariboo.

This has made it possible to increase facilities between the two points, and by linking up the radiotelephone system with landlines between Prince George and Prince Rupert, leased by B.C. Telephone Co. from the C.N.R., an additional circuit has been provided between Vancouver and Prince Rupert.

Among exchanges in the central and northern parts of B.C. acquired by the B.C. Telephone Co. are Terrace, Hazelton, Vanderhoof, Smithers, Burns Lake, Quesnel and Wells, and the company is now planning for the installation of additional long distance circuits between a number of these points.

Oil Men Probing Alaska's Regions

Nearly every major oil company in the United States will be exploring petroleum possibilities in Alaska this summer, according to a consulting engineer.

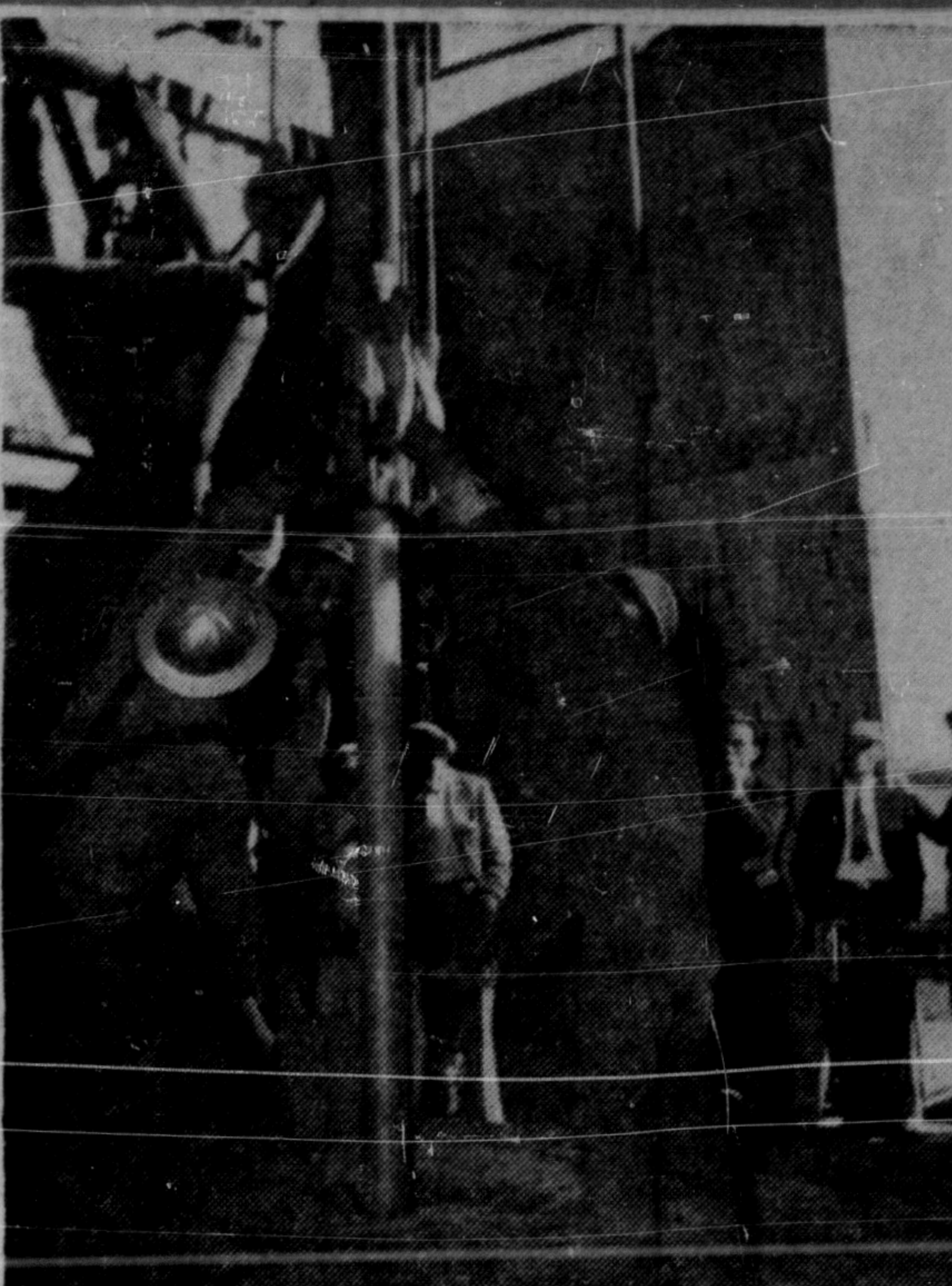
Ted C. Mathews, who returned to Fairbanks recently after a series of conferences with top officials in the petroleum industry, said he found "tremendous interest in Alaska existing among top geologists working for major oil companies."

Mathews, who now works for the Fairbanks Oil & Gas Co., formerly was consulting engineer for the Navy's Petroleum No. 4 exploration project at Point Barrow.

Other project of paramount importance is the proposed construction of a natural gas pipeline to the coast and western United States. In a matter of weeks we hope the necessary approval will be given which will enable immediate construction. The \$110,000,000 project will not only put men and machines to work, but will mean immediate development of the Peace River oil and natural gas, which is already proven to exist here in large quantities.

Approval of the line will, of course, spark a stepped-up program of well-drilling. Already three refineries are projected for Dawson Creek.

Our town is indeed looking to the future with confidence.



ROUGHNECKS drilling for natural gas and oil in B.C.'s Peace River area are a familiar sight in recent days, and activity is expected to be stepped up to fever pitch once the proposed natural gas-line from Dawson Creek to the west coast is approved. The \$110,000,000 project hangs in the balance with the U.S. Federal Power Commission. (Photo by Belvie Studios.)

Survey Crews Begin Work On Peace River-PGE Link

History-making survey crews of the railroad into North Vancouver routes for the first railroad to connect the Peace River area with the rest of British Columbia, a little more than 300 miles.

Estimated as a \$50,000,000 project, the link will mean the third extension of the B.C. government-owned Pacific Great Eastern Railway, for years the brunt of political attacks, dubbed the greatest government folly of all times, and branded a "white elephant."

The completed line will be connected with other Canadian and American railway systems after operating for 40 years between two remote terminals through a sparsely settled area.

Meanwhile, construction crews are underway linking the southern portion of the north-south 400-mile railroad to Vancouver.

First extension to the railway was completed in November in 1952, from Quesnel to Prince George to connect with the east-west transprovincial Canadian National Railways line.

Premier W. A. C. Bennett recently announced the government would wipe out interest of the \$97,000,000 that has been pyramiding on the railway's debt to the province for 40 years.

At the same time he announced plans for the extension of the railroad from Squamish, 40 miles up-coast, and into the northern Peace River area from Prince George, a little more than 300 miles.

The northern extension will connect with the Northern Alberta Railways at Dawson Creek from Edmonton.

Completion of the PGE is heralded by Prince George as "a wonderful boost" for its industrial economy. In support, it cites the result of the rail extension from Quesnel, accounting for 6,500 additional carloads shipped over the CNR alone in 1953.

A PGE official recently announced that last year's rail revenue was the greatest in its history.

Revenue over the line when completed is estimated by officials as \$2,750,000 annually.

Until the southern link is completed, the railroad continues to ship cars from tidewater at remote Squamish by barge to Vancouver.

Biggest reward for the PGE is expected in the outlet it will provide for products of the Peace River area; most extensive farming country in the province, and also Canada's greatest natural gas reserve.

West coast Transmission Company's pipeline project will provide the line between more than three and one half trillion cubic feet of proven natural gas reserves in the Peace River Area of British Columbia and Alberta, and markets in British Columbia, Washington and Oregon.

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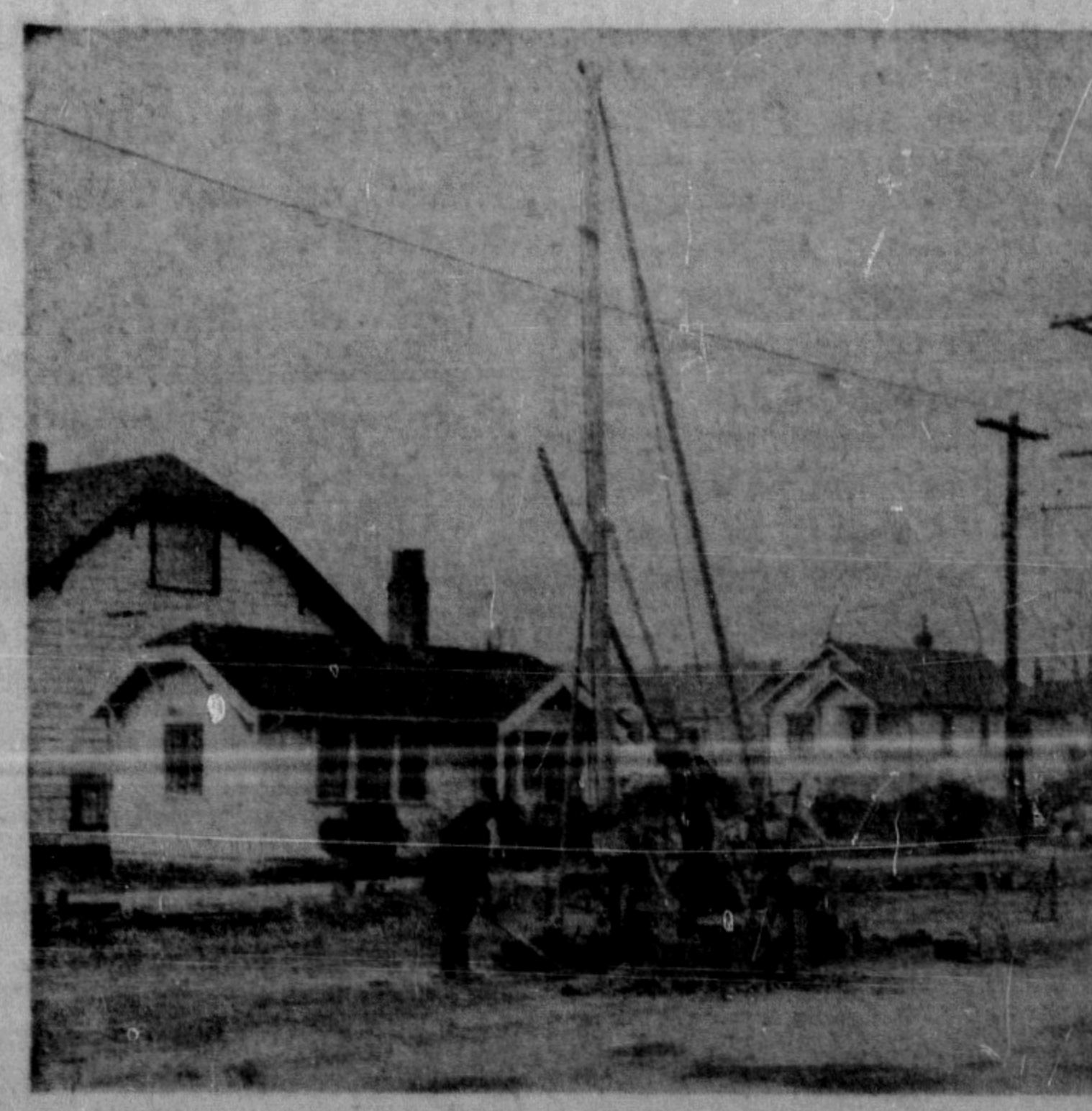
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