



THE CAROL SINGERS OF PORT SIMPSON.

Port Simpson After Forty-Five Years' Missionary Effort

LETTER FROM THE REV. J. C. SPENCER, M.D., PORT SIMPSON, B.C.

Supported by the Epworth Leagues of Stanstead and Waterloo Districts.

Dr. Crosby began mission work here in 1874. Since that time progress has been made along many lines. Old customs were laid aside and totem poles, the strongest reminders of old customs, were cut down. Schools were opened and earnest efforts were made to lead the people to good citizenship. They soon became law-abiding, industrious and desirable workmen for canneries, sawmills and mines. The women and girls always found ready employment inside the canneries.

From Dugout Canoe to Aeroplane.

In the early days each man had a canoe hollowed out of the trunk of a British Columbia cedar. These varied in size from ten to forty or fifty feet. Much skill was displayed in their manufacture. Later on, these canoes were

replaced by round-bottomed boats. Many of the natives became boat builders and carpenters. During the last ten years gas boats have largely taken the place of round-bottomed boats. A native builds a boat, orders an engine from the outside, installs it in his boat and is ready for work. Some day soon, we expect to see a native flying from village to village in a home made aeroplane.

The Improvement in the Home.

When the mission began, all the people lived in large houses without partitions, in which several families resided. The latter were soon replaced by frame houses for individual families. They were very plain buildings at first, but as the years have been going by a wonderful change in architecture has occurred. At present the homes are of various designs, most of them being comfortable and pretty.

The improvement is nowhere more in evidence than inside the home. Fifty years ago, in the one-roomed house, were to be seen dried or salt fish, dried berries and bark, standing or hanging around the room. Today, in the modern home, no food is ever seen in the living rooms, but it is kept in the kitchen. The rooms are furnished with oilcloth or linoleum on the floor, chairs, tables, papered walls, sewing machines, organs, pianos, rocking chairs, sofas, beds (usually iron), pictures on the walls; in short as well furnished as the average home in any community.

Native Enterprises.

Four of our villages have very creditable general stores which are well kept and always tidy. There is a town hall, and several societies and clubs which entertain the villagers with concerts and other entertainments.

Before the mission was opened Indian dancing had a large place in village life. This has been discontinued but the white man's dance has been substituted. Opinions may differ as to the good or evil of dancing taken in moderation, but we feel that few can fail to see that when it is kept up all night or nearly so, it becomes a source of danger physically and morally.

Municipal Affairs well Regulated.

The village is nicely laid out in blocks. There is a spirit of enterprise abroad. The people have ordered an electric lighting plant. There is a good town hall in which public meetings are held. A town bell rings curfew at nine p.m. The streets are kept in good repair by the council. The councillors are elected annually. They serve without remuneration and conduct all village matters in a dignified manner. The choice of councillors is usually the best that could be made.

The Crosby Girls' Home.

There is a girls' home, in which forty native girls are housed. This home was founded by Dr. Crosby and is carried on by our Woman's Missionary Society. The girls are well provided for and well cared for. They are

taught housekeeping, sewing and fancy work (of which most natives are fond and in which they excel), laundry, domestic science, plain and pastry cooking and bread making. Girls are kept till eighteen years of age, when most of them marry or go out to service. Some of the best homes in the North are those of ex-pupils. Some of the graduates have disappointed us, but this is not to be wondered at, all things considered.

Indian Schools Handicapped by Migratory Life.

There is also a day school with two rooms. At present we have over sixty enrolled in the village day school. Our difficulty here is that we have no industries in the village. The people find ready employment but must go away from home to get it. It may consist of hunting, fishing, logging, mining or pile driving, bridge or carpenter work, and many other lines of work. When they go they take their families, for no one wants to be responsible for anyone else's family. This makes it impossible for us to keep up regular attendance in day school, and instead of a boy or girl going to school two hundred days each year, perhaps they go twenty-five or thirty days. It is obvious to all that progress under such conditions must be slow.

The Port Simpson General Hospital.

We have in the village a government hospital of about thirty beds, presided over by Dr. Large. The staff of nurses is supplied by the Woman's Missionary Society of our church. Our medical needs are well looked after and we count ourselves fortunate in having a good institution, with good management and in sympathy with mission work.

Church Services.

The mission work has never been closed since it was opened in 1874. Two regular Sunday services are held: at 11 a.m. an English service, at 2.30 p.m. Sunday School and Bible class, at 7 p.m. a short sermon in English, which is repeated in the native tongue, or perhaps a sermon in the native tongue alone. At 7 p.m. on Thursday the weekly prayer meeting is held. On Tuesday and Friday the Epworth League holds services. These usually consist of singing, prayer, sermon, followed by testimonies by a number of people. The League consists of adult and junior members, about 150 in all. Their meetings are always conducted by natives unless the missionary or some one else is invited to speak.

Native Talent Makes Our Services Attractive.

The native people are musical. Most villages have a brass band, some villages two bands. Many of the players can play more than one instrument. There is in our church a good choir, assisted by Dr. and Mrs. Large, the latter presiding at the pipe organ. They give us good music and are not satisfied with easy pieces but take selections such as the Hallelujah Chorus and others of that class.

We are fortunate in having with us Mr. Nathan Lawson, a native who

has special ability and has had special training in cities south of us as a window dresser. Each year he decorates our church. It is always beautiful at Christmas, when our Christmas service is mostly music.

Independent Sects—Salvation Army and Christian Workers.

On Monday and Wednesday there are evangelistic services held by natives who have allied themselves with the Salvation Army. They have a hall, take collections and otherwise raise money, which they spend as they wish. They aim and intend to be separate and free, but as a matter of fact they frequently attend our services and to a limited extent assist with some of our local financial obligations. Some of their numbers have been appointed to office by the Salvation Army.

There is also in our village what is known as the "Christian Band of Workers." These were organized by missionaries many years ago, and intended to be a band of workers who could be depended upon and called upon by the missionary to assist. After doing good work for years, they were led by some friction to apply to the local legislature for incorporation, which was granted as to clubs. They too have their own hall and conduct separate services. They raise money, as does the Army, and spend it as they wish.

Finances—The Indians Give Well for Local Purposes, but Lack Wide Vision.

Our native people respond when we make an appeal for local purposes, but when we appeal for money for China or Japan, to help people who come here to compete with our natives along all lines of industry, they cannot see it as we do, and fail to respond as we think they should. This is, we believe, largely accounted for in the fact that they live on reserves, are denied citizenship and in most ways are treated as wards of the Government. To give them citizenship and treat them as citizens, we believe would make different people of them in a few years.

For church improvement this year we have raised \$2,500. Our people had ordered a pipe organ from Ed Lye & Sons, Toronto, before the National Campaign was announced. The villagers had also ordered an electric lighting plant which is now being installed, and before this letter reaches Toronto our town will be lighted by a Delco plant.

We expect to raise \$500 for missions this year. We are also working on the National Campaign. Our co-workers here are loyal and have practised tithing for years.

Yours in the work,

J. C. SPENCER.