Alaska On S.S. "Princess Sophia"

NORTHERN B.C. INSPECTION - 1912

"Princess Mary" ("Princess Sophia")

JUNE 19, 1912

Sailed from Vancouver at 10:00 o'clock, "Princess Mary", Capt. Robertson. Dock arrangements satisfactory, and there was no confusion or delay. There was a small passenger list.

JUNE 20, 1912

ALERT BAY Arrived 1.23 p.m. Landed one passenger and took on two. The Cannery has been increased to twice its size, but no other improvements have been made, nor has there been any increase in the permanent population.

JUNE 21, 1912

SWANSON BAY reached at 6:05 a.m.

LOWE INLET 11:30 a.m. Situated at the end of a very pretty arm. Cannery and about twelve houses. Cannery owned by B.C. Packers. This is a very difficult landing, and can only be made with suitable tides. The settlement is backed by high mountains rising abruptly from the sea level. In close proximity to the town is a very pretty little waterfall, which may be observed from the deck of the ship. Fishing is the only industry.

PRINCE RUPERT Docked at 4:32 p.m. Population in 1911 was estimated at 5,000. This year the Assessor estimates the population at 4,500, which is in excess of the correct number. The concensus of opinion is that there are one thousand less people at Prince Rupert than there were a year ago. This is caused by the construction work being carried on at the end of steel, about two hundred miles inland on the other side of the Skeena, and also caused by a number of people, finding that the progress would be slow, and that the railway would not be completed through for another year and six months or more, have decided to go away for the time being. All street improvement work has been stopped, as the city has expended one million dollars in grading streets up to the present time, and funds are exhausted. Prices of real estate are being maintained, and there is more or less movement. All other business is quiet, and

the city has not improved, and it is disappointing in appearance. The Government dock has been completed, and it is a very good one. The reported sinking of the end of the dock under pressure of a heavy load is not considered at all serious. The G.T.P. have taken over the operation of the dock used by Foley, Welsh and Stewart, and are re-piling it. They are also excavating for their station, which will be located between the wharf and the ~~xxxxxx~~city, the trackage serving the station as well as the wharf property. They are at present operating a train 164 miles inland, consisting of baggage car, two colonist cars, and one first class coach. The train leaves Prince Rupert Monday morning and returns Tuesday night, leaves Wednesday morning and returns Thursday night, leaves Saturday morning and returns Sunday night at 8:00 o'clock. This train formerly arrived at 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon. In consequence of late arrival we changed the schedule of our Vancouver boat, making the departure hour 9:00 o'clock, which gives an opportunity for passengers from the G.T.P. train to make through connection, instead of waiting for the "Prince Rupert" Monday morning. Made arrangements with Mr. McNab to go up the G.T.P. line and see that all our advertising and schedules were properly displayed, and to consider advisability of appointing a Commission Agent at Hazelton. Also arranged for him to open an Agency at Port Essington on the Skeena River on a commission basis, enabling passengers to come to Prince Rupert by launch, or to Tyee on the G.T.P.

Made a trip by motor launch two miles down the harbor to inspect the new cold storage plant for the Canadian Fish and Cold Storage Company. They have erected a splendid concrete building, which cost $400,000.00, erected by the Seattle Construction Company. It will freeze about 75 tons of fish a day. Plant has storage capacity of 13,600,000 pounds. They will ship ten car loads a day. The building contains over thirty miles of piping.

The G.T.P. Inn, which is run by the Company, has been remodelled. The rooms are comfortable; the table and service generally in the dining room atrocious. The breakfast and lunch was hardly fit to eat; the other meals somewhat better. This hotel is under the management of the Company, and it could not even compare with the poorest hotel we ever operated on the C.P.R., and the Management comes in for some harsh criticism at Prince Rupert.

Heard some conversation of general dissatisfaction on the Queen Charlotte Islands on account of the G.T.P. increasing the rates since we gave up the service.

GENERAL OFFICE CONDITIONS satisfactory. Passenger business shows a decrease of $861.00 for 1911 against 1910. For the first four months of 1912 we show a very good increase. The number of tickets sold to Vancouver and South has more than doubled. It bears out the statement that people are leaving.

Sailed early Saturday morning for Observatory Inlet points and Granby Bay.

JUNE 22, 1912

GRANBY BAY Arrived about 7:00 a.m. Granby Bay is situated at the head of Observatory Inlet. The smelter people have a small clearing house on the wharf for passing through their men, and a general office and warehouse at the head of the wharf. The mine is about a mile inland. We were fortunate in finding Mr. Graves, President of the Company, his son, and Mr. Sylvester, General Manager, at Granby Bay. They were about to leave for Vancouver, and we held the steamer for them, leaving Granby Bay at 9:15. They were returning to Prince Rupert, thence to Vancouver by the "Prince Rupert", having engaged their staterooms, but we succeeded in convincing them to travel through on the "Princess Mary".

Had a full discussion of their business in connection with development at the mines, where they have already spent a million and a half dollars. They are spending a million and a half additional. (Private report to Manager Troup thereon.)

PORT NELSON AND ARANDALE CANNERIES. These belong to the Wallace Fisheries, and the two canneries are about 600 yards apart. We arrived at 11:50 and remained at Port Nelson for about fifty minutes. It was impossible to land at Arandale on account of the condition of the tide.

WALES ISLAND CANNERY. Arrived in the afternoon about 3:00 o'clock. The cannery is in charge of Mr. Des Brisay, an old New Brunswicker, who gave the name of Charlie Suey of Vancouver, who hires his Chinamen. The Cannery is very modern, the cans being filled by automatic machinery. He expressed great satisfaction at our proposed schedule, and also promised us additional business.

Reached Prince Rupert about 6:00 o'clock, ~~and proceeded to~~ calling at Port Simpson. No improvements whatever. The two stores in the place were closed for stock-taking, and the little village seemed deserted.

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JUNE 23, 1912

Left Prince Rupert about 3:00 a.m., and proceeded to Balmoral and Port Essington Canneries direct. Decided to once more establish a commission agency at Port Essington, in the hopes of getting increased business from the Canneries when the Chinese move. It is one of the best fishing ports on the Inlet.

After leaving Port Essington, called at Claxton, where there is a large cannery owned by the Wallace Fisheries. They expressed satisfaction with the proposed schedule, and promised us additional business.

We proceeded to Oceanic Cannery, but were unable to land account low water. A tug was sent out and Chinamen were transferred. We carried a total of 115 Chinese from Vancouver for the various canneries on the Inlet.

Inverness was the last stop.

We proceeded to Prince Rupert, where we arrived early in the afternoon, docking at the Government wharf, where we unloaded freight and then proceeded to our proper berth at the G.T.P.wharf.

The "Princess Mary" departed at 9:00 o'clock for Vancouver, they having secured six passengers off the G.T.P. train, which arrived at 8:00 o'clock from Skeena River.

JUNE 24, 1912

Spent the entire day at Prince Rupert, visiting Agents and meeting citizems, also inspecting cold storage plant as referred to above. Departed from Prince Rupert on the "Princess Sophia" for Skagway about 9:00 o'clock. The steamship did not arrive at Prince Rupert until 7:00 o'clock, and there was no wireless message sent, which caused passengers some inconvenience, as they were obliged to remain around Prince Rupert all afternoon.

The G.T.P. steamer "Prince Rupert" departed at 9:00 o'clock in the morning for Vancouver, with between 30 and 40 passengers. Their business Southbound is very poor. They are to commence next week running one of the boats North to Stewart once a week. This is being done against the recommendation of their General Agent at Prince Rupert, who states there is no business at Stewart.

There are more steamers going into Prince Rupert than there is business for at the present time. The arrivals are :-

Monday, C.P. from Vancouver
Tuesday, Union S.S.Co. from Vancouver
Wednesday, G.T.P. from Vancouver
Thursday, No arrivals
Friday, C.P. from Vancouver, and Union S.S.Co.
Saturday, C.P. from Granby Bay, G.T.P. from Vancouver
Sunday, C.P. from Skeena

Departures:-

Monday, G.T.P. for Vancouver, C.P. for Skagway
Tuesday, No departures
Wednesday, Union S.S.Co. for Vancouver
Thursday, No departures
Friday, G.T.P. for Vancouver, C.P. for Granby Bay
Saturday, Union S.S.Co. for Vancouver
Sunday, C.P. for Skeena River, and C.P. for Vancouver

Reached ~~Prince~~ Port Simpson shortly after midnight, where we were delayed half an hour making a landing. We put off a Lighthouse Keeper's wife and three children. Cleared about one o'clock. This appears to be a very awkward call for the Alaska boats. To discuss this call with Capt. Troup, and if he approves cut it out for the Alaska boats.

JUNE 25, 1912

On "Princess Sophia". Cleared up correspondence.

Called at KETCHIKAN. Our Agent seems to be more active, and increased his business in 1911 about $1,600.00, and for the first five months in 1912 about $800.00. Everything is going satisfactorily with the exception of some difficulty with his baggage at the wharf. Discussed with Mr. Strong, who is Wharf Agent. To be taken up with Manager Troup.

Passed into Wrangall Narrows at 8:05 p.m. and cleared the Narrows at 9:42; one hour and 46 minutes in making the passage, 12 minutes ~~under~~ over the time of the May, June 20, 1911, under almost identical conditions. The view was somewhat obscured by clouds hanging over the Mountains, and the weather was cold.

Arranged, after discussion with Capt. Campbell, to call at Taku Glacier Northbound, 7:00 o'clock Wednesday morning, and had notice posted on the ship to that effect.

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JUNE 26, 1912

Reached the Taku Glacier at 7:03. Weather cool. The water was clear of ice to the right, and we steamed close to the Glacier, reaching a point within 300 feet of the face. We had boat and fire drill, and remained about thirty minutes, taking a sounding with Sir William Thom son's patent sounding apparatus directly in front of the Glacier, recording a depth of 52 fathoms, or 312 feet.

JUNEAU. General conditions at Juneau practically the same as last year. There has been no additional building. Found Mr. Spickett as enthusiastic and active as ever. Has given up charge of Post Office. Expects to be able todo more business for us. Has a slight increase in revenue the first five months of 1912, and an increase of $6,000.00 for last year. The Alaska S.S. Company have two additional boats running into Juneau this year, the "Mariposa" and "Alameda".

Had a splendid passage Juneau to Skagway, where we arrived about 7:00 o'clock ship's time. We were met by Mr. Lowle, Agent at Skagway, and after dinner went over the general conditions at Skagway. Found everything cleared up so far as the Passenger Department is concerned. His office has been renovated, and is the best ticket office in Skagway. The floor has been covered with nice linoleum and the walls and ceilings properly kalsomined.

The Alaska S.S.Company had notified their Agent to make certain reduced rates for the Elks Convention and Potlatch, and the Agent, through a misunderstanding, was prepared to sell tickets by the "Dolphin", sailing next day. We had a meeting and decided not to reduce the rates for either the "Princess Sophia" or the "Dolphin".

JUNE 27, 1912

Spent the entire day at Skagway with Mr. Lowle, interviewing people, and President Dickeson of the White Pass. We do the bulk of the business out of Skagway, and our service is very popular, and the majority of the people will travel on a C.P.R. ship whenever they can. The hotel people informed me that they get more business from our steamships than any other steamships arriving in port from the South, and they were all pleased at the arrangement whereby our ships arrive at night and remain over a day, as it gives them business. It also helps out the stores.

The place has not improved. There has been no increase in population, and business is as quiet as it can possibly be.

The Pacific Coast S.S.Co. and the Alaska S.S.Co. have offices on the main street.

We secured about fifty passengers from Skagway for the Southbound trip, including some prominent people from the interior.

The greatest satisfaction is expressed in regard to the "Princess Sophia", and we should have no difficulty in holding and increasing our traffic from Alaska on this steamship as soon as she becomes well known.

An incident in connection with Capt. MacLeod of the "Princess May" is worthy of note. On his last trip he went through to White Horse, and someone telegraphed that he was coming, and when he reached there the entire community was at the station to welcome him. The greater portion of the passenger business carried on the "Princess May" is entirely due to his influence in Alaska.

We sailed from Skagway at 7:30 p.m. The weather was fine and we had a splendid passage that night, the only incident of note being a large whale, which came within a reasonable distance of the ship. It was about 60 feet long.

JUNE 28, 1912

Reached Juneau about 4:00 a.m., and left about 5:00 a.m. We secured nineteen passengers out of Juneau. Our Agent and his wife are both great figures in the community, and I arranged to give him two additional staterooms on his allottment. We could not better our position in Juneau. It was bright daylight at Juneau at 4:00 o'clock in the morning.

KETCHIKAN. We reached Ketchikan about 11:00 o'clock. Took on four passengers, and five tons of ice. Had a very difficult time making a landing, and the wharfengers were not on deck to take the lines. Mr. Ryus engaged another man. Full particulars to be reported to Capt. Troup by him.

JUNE 29, 1912

PORT SIMPSON Called at Port Simpson but did not get up. This seems to be a useless call for the Alaska boats.

PRINCE RUPERT. Arrived at Prince Rupert about 9:30 and left about 11:30 a.m. We carried thirty one passengers from Prince Rupert South. Had an opportunity to talk to a number

of people and they are all depressed over business conditions. Our boats are doing well proportionately, much better than our competitors. The "Princess Mary" brought up the previous night 105 Chinese, and a good first class passenger list from Vancouver. Our people are active and sharp after business. This was specially reported to me by a personal friend, who has been around for a week, and he watched the situation at the hotel and elsewhere. He advised that in buying a ticket to the Queen Charlotte Islands he found the schedule had been changed after he boarded the "Prince John" at the dock. They did not know it at the G.T.P. City office..

Weather conditions fine. Received mail from Vancouver and spent the balance of the day looking after it.

Had a splendid and uneventful trip from Prince Rupert to Vancouver, where we arrived at 7:00 a.m. July 1st. We made a call at Swanson Bay Saturday about 8:00 o'clock, and at Alert Bay on Sunday morning, where we stopped for thirty minutes to allow passengers to see the totem poles.

Careful inquiry among passengers on the ship failed to bring forth any cause for complaint in regard to our service. Every one was loud in their praise of the ship and service generally.