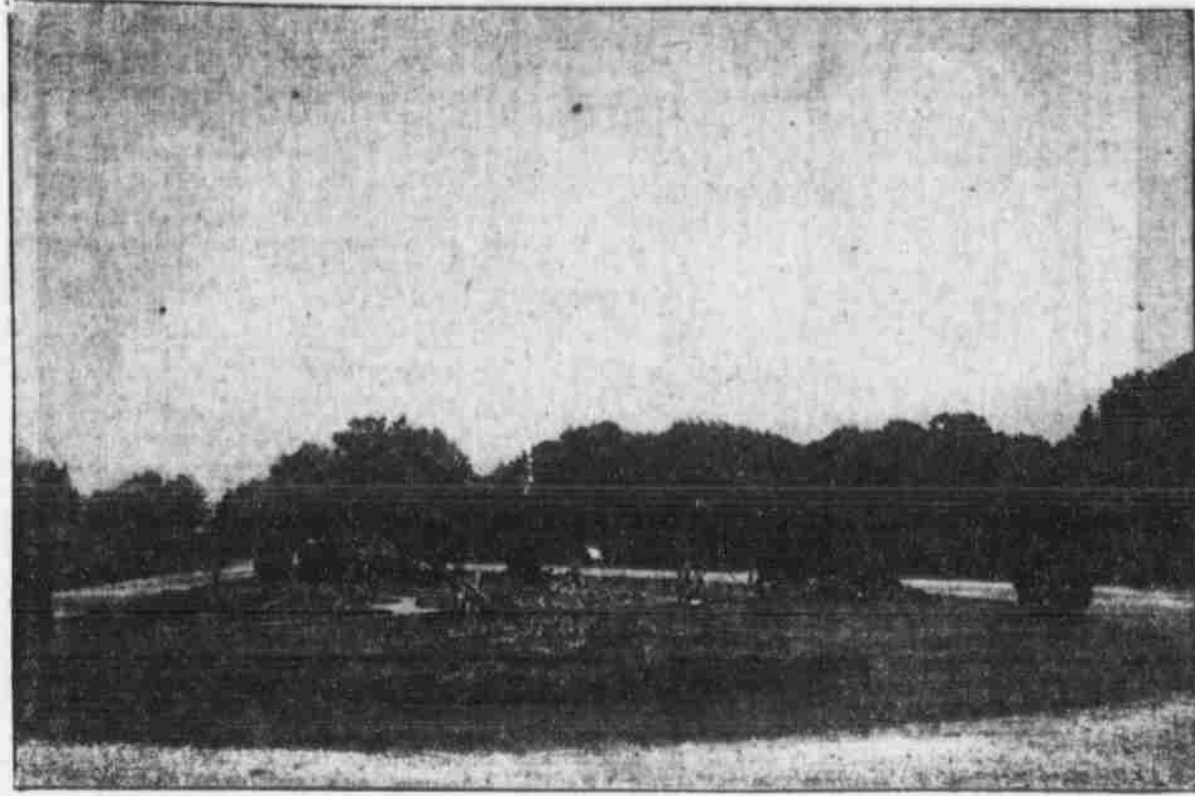
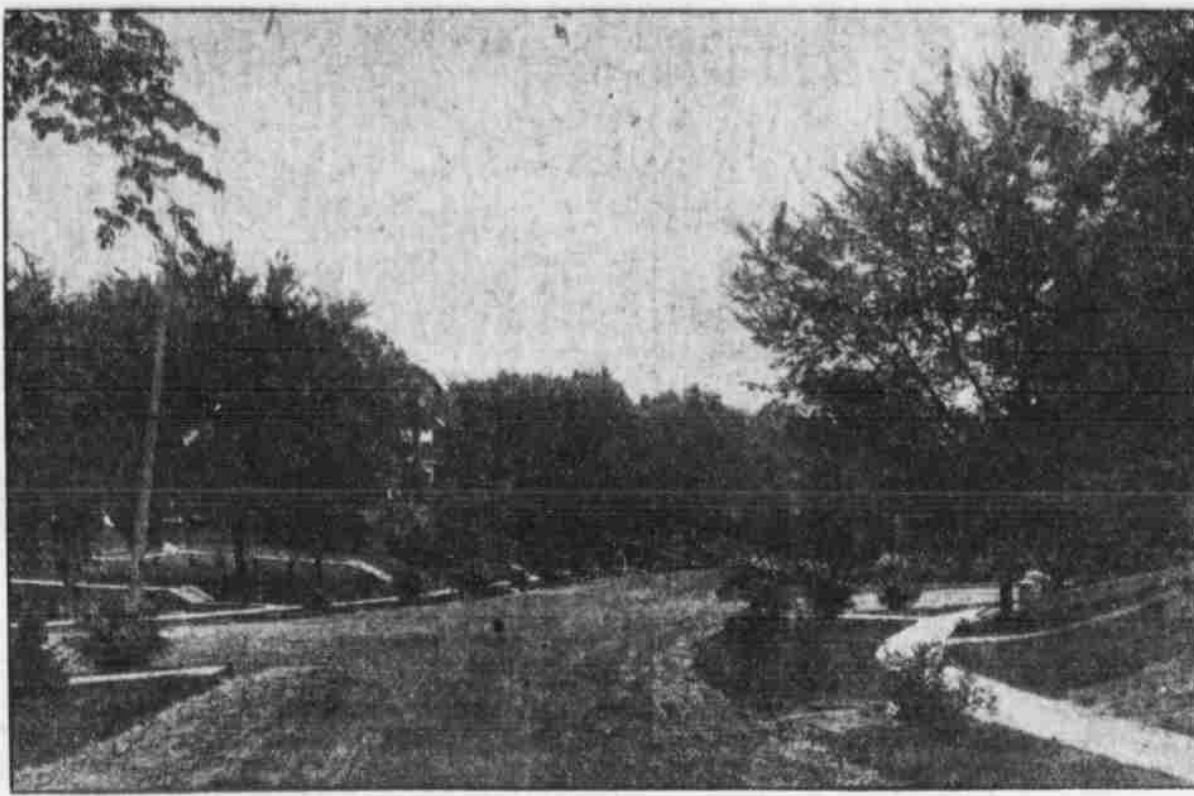


## OMAHA PARKS AND BOULEVARDS SOURCE OF CIVIC PRIDE

Detailed Information About the Beautiful Pleasure Grounds and Drives that Belong to the People and That Are Each Year Being Made More Lively in All Their Aspects



IN HANSCOM PARK.



SCENE ALONG A BOULEVARD.

SOMEWHERE there is a statement running to the effect that the parks of a city are but as blocks of marble awaiting the chisel of the sculptor to give them form beauty and meaning. Omaha today has the parks, a baker's dozen of them. The taxpayers have working for them a group of sculptors consisting of Superintendent W. R. Adams and the members of the park board. The sculptors are and have been more or less hampered, however, from one cause or another. Money has not always been plentiful, and to carry through condemnation proceedings has often been a herculean task. Hardly less disappointing than lack of money and court fights has been the necessity for rejecting many an appraisal that did not seem to the board just right. Here is a specimen instance of winning by the board after waiting a while: In 1891 the city offered \$1,200 an acre for land north of Riverview park that was wanted. The offer was refused, and in 1898 the land was secured for \$250 an acre by condemnation proceedings.

Omaha is said to be the one large city in the world with a great river flowing by its front which has no river park as a sort of inviting dooryard, unless we count Riverview as such. Yet it was cheated of this valuable possession only by the shortsightedness of early councils, for in a map published by A. D. Jones in 1854 Omaha was shown to have a river front park. The tract so dedicated was bounded by Davenport on the north, Jackson on the south and by Eighth and Ninth streets on the east and west. Great wholesale houses, shabby warehouses, junk yards, railroad yards and railroad depots now occupy the old park site. Even their real value, to say nothing of the esthetic feature, would be immensely enhanced today were there a big open space, parked and beautified, to the east of Ninth street. The water front parks of Chicago and Milwaukee will serve to illustrate the point.

Jefferson square was shown as a park on the Jones map, and has been held as such against several attempts to divert it to business uses. On the old map Washington park also appears. It afterward became the site of the old court house, on which site the Paxton block now stands. Capitol square was also shown as a park, and will serve to be classed in the list of beauty spots today, for on it stands the high school, with its winding walks, stretches of greensward and many fine trees. These four park sites exhausted the list made in the days of '54.

It will be interesting to trace briefly the disposition made by city councils of the old-time park sites. In '61 the land between Jones and Jackson was donated by the council to Thomas Davis, on which he erected a steam mill. Later the council gave the land at the northeast corner of Ninth and Farnam to aid in the erection of the Herndon house, now the Union Pacific headquarters. Later still what was left was cut up into blocks C, D, E, F, G, H and I and was sold to private owners, being at once devoted to business purposes. Hence there is not even a driveway along the shore of the river.

The approach to the high school—Capitol avenue parkway—is a good specimen of street parking, even though it does not receive the care it should have. Several such pieces of street parking are made already, others are in the making, and some more are planned. The central forty-four feet of Woolworth avenue from Hanscom park to Thirty-sixth street, has been in charge of the park board since '97 and is planted to trees and shrubs. Avondale park is the

pretentious name of the parked space on Webster street between Twenty-seventh and Twenty-eighth avenues. It gets little attention, though, and the two curbed and seeded spaces have on them only nine scraggy bushes, five very indifferent trees and one passable tree.

Florence boulevard begins at Chicago and Nineteenth streets, but it does not as yet deserve the name of real street parking until Ames avenue is reached. From Ames to Miller park this parkway runs northwest on the ridge of the bluff, is lined with forest trees and overlooks the Missouri river bottom. At Ohio street the boulevard twists over to Twentieth, then runs north to Ames. There are other pieces of street parking that will eventually become part of a finished, harmonious whole. Such are to be found on Central boulevard north from Twenty-sixth to Hanscom park and from Hanscom to Riverview. In all there are about ten and a half miles of boulevarding in what may be called a fairly finished state.

Omaha has something over 900 acres in parks—to be exact, 917.87 acres. This includes Levi Carter park, the last donation to the Omaha system. The original cost of the parklands purchased by the city was \$447,264, in round numbers. They have cost for maintenance to January 1, last, \$229,291, and the improvements made represent a first cost of \$349,826. Total cost to the city of purchasing, improving and maintaining, \$1,026,381. To this must be added salaries and incidental general expenses since 1889, when the parks came under control of the first park board.

After the sale of the blocks named, in the present business district, by the city, nothing at all was done to provide for parks until 1872, when the late A. J. Hanscom donated the present park bearing his name. In giving the land Mr. Hanscom stipulated that the city should expend on improvements \$3,000 in 1873, \$4,000 in each of the next three years and \$5,000 in each of the next two years, making an expenditure of \$25,000 in five years. During the years '96-'93 \$30,000 was spent for a band stand, a pavilion and a greenhouse.

The first pavilion burned down in '93 and the present one was built the following year at a cost of \$14,000. Much money went to grading and roadmaking, and so today Hanscom park is the one complete picture of sylvan loveliness in the city. From a piece of unlovely brush on the outskirts it has been made into a centerpiece of exquisite character, with a lake of beauty softly sleeping therein, and is in the heart of a neighborhood second to none in the west.

In this connection, the increase in value of surrounding property because of improved parks will bear statement. Eleven years ago, before Hanscom was anything like it today, the increase in value of residence sites surrounding it was twenty times more than the average increase noted throughout the city. This ratio is said to hold good, and in some instances bettered, wherever statistics have been prepared on the subject.

Jefferson square is a breathing place in the midst of busy, dusty city life; but Elmwood is a big outdoors stretch of hill and dale, level sward and deep ravines, outside the city limits. Riverview and Fontanelle are almost of a size, in distantly separated parts of the city; the first is quite satisfactorily improved, the last in its wild state almost entirely. Bemis is a gem, in a high class residence section; Miller is a big, tree-dotted lawn far from the center, but rapidly being surrounded by happy, if modest, homes. Kountze park is the exposition site, adorned but very little, and Deer park is a small wildwood exhibit out on South Central boulevard, starting about Fifteenth and running to Twentieth. Curtiss Turner park is, through its name, a memorial to an estimable young man; it is in the Upper Farnam district, and in contrast is Bluff View park, out at Decatur and Forty-seventh. Both are almost as nature left them, but in a few years the park board hopes that these, with Deer park, will be as pleasurable in dress and getup as even Turner and Bemis.

This year the board will put the bulk of its work on the new Levi Carter park. Shore decoration will not be attempted to any extent at this time, but probably \$10,000 will be spent for dredging

equipment and dredging work, with the idea of making Cut-Off lake a most attractive body of water. It is the largest in the state, clean and sweet, and its springs connected with the Missouri river, and as the movement of the water is constant, this lake is an acquisition the value of which is but lightly sensed at present. The board has plans incubating that are ambitious enough to indicate it has a correct perspective in mind. When decked out with all the trimmings that the best landscape gardening experts can suggest and put on, the 303 acres of land and water comprised in Levi Carter park will undoubtedly be listed among the pictorial panoramas lying outdoors in the United States that are worth traveling to see and enjoy.

What is the value of Omaha parks? About \$2,000,000, at a very modest estimate, in money. Their esthetic value is hardly to be calculated; but all who have given the matter study assert that in the years to come their service to the people will be vastly enlarged.

"Up north" is as yet not in the same class with Virginia, for instance, or even with "down east." Modern homes of taste and elegance we have about our park spots, but we lack, and will lack for some time, the statues and exquisite floral effects that distinguish the southern and eastern parks. We lack, too, something of the natural beauties that constitute a very large part of the attractiveness of such parks as Minnehaha in Minnesota, for instance; but under all the handicaps of newness, cleared ground, lack of money, legal difficulties and the like, Superintendent Adams, with the board behind him, has accomplished much good work. By and by, when the people themselves begin to take a lively interest in cleaning and beautifying the section or blocks in which they live, then the parks and everything that pertains to parking will receive an impetus such as has been experienced in other cities. Even in the most unlikely neighborhoods, seemingly, in New York City, wonders have been accomplished by arousing public interest. One notable instance is Mulberry Bend park in New York, which cost \$2,000,000, and is now valued at \$12,000,000. It has changed the tone of the neighborhood entirely.

By a law passed during the recent session of the legislature, all public playgrounds are placed under control of the Omaha Park board. The board will assume the duty in a willing spirit; in fact, considerable of the improved territory already under its control is used as playground by little folks, and grownups, too. Much of the street parking, or boulevarding, is more or less used as playground, and Bemis and Curtiss Turner parks are in a practical sense neighborhood playgrounds of the highest merit. Miller park has public golf links, while most of the other parks are very popular with picnic parties.

This year a pavilion is to be erected in Elmwood park, somewhat on the order of the pavilions in Hanscom and Riverview. Bids are to be opened shortly for the structure, which will be 30x100 feet in dimensions.

The number of trees set out by the board since taking charge of the parks runs away up into the thousands; 35,000 were set out in one season at Miller park alone. These trees cost the board in the neighborhood of 15 cents each. Grading and roadmaking have been costly items for the board, but the results are considered as justifying the expense in fullest measure.

Propagating, raising and setting out of flowers and shrubs is a large job in the parks of Omaha. An inventory of plants and shrubs on hand in 1898 made their market value something over \$3,000. Present value of the plants and shrubs on hand for use in the parks and along the boulevards is undoubtedly twice that amount.

No other park in Omaha boasts such a variety of entrancing scenery as Riverview, and it is here that a substantial start has been made toward having a collection of wild animals indigenous to the Rocky mountains and the western prairies. Natural conditions have been cleverly utilized to make bear pits, dens, roosts and pastures for the animals. The collection is not large as yet, but the animals to be seen include buffalo, bear, elk, deer, wolves, coyotes, badgers, foxes, raccoons, wild cats, guinea pigs, eagles, owls and hawks.

Donations of property for park or boulevard purposes have been made to the board, from time to time, by A. J. Hanscom, Mrs. Turner, J. M. Woolworth, Herman Kountze, W. I. Kierstead, W. J. Connell, George P. Bemis, Mrs. Levi Carter, Lyman Richardson, John T. Bell, Henry B. Wiley, Leopold Doll, William F. Snyder and perhaps others. The acreage in the various parks is: Levi Carter, 303; Elmwood, 208; Riverview, 111; Fontanelle, 107; Miller, 78; Hanscom, 57; Deer, 19; Kountze, 10; Bemis, 10; Turner, 7 and a fraction; Bluff View, not quite an acre; Himebaugh, 1 and a fraction; Jefferson Square, one block.

The first park board consisted of Dr. George L. Miller, president; G. W. Linger, vice president; Augustus Pratt, George B. Lake and Alfred Millard. All of these, and Dr. Miller especially, are credited with most excellent work in inaugurating and pushing the park system as at present laid out. They have had worthy successors from time to time in public-spirited men who have given generously of their time to further the work. The present board consists of E. P. Berryman, president; Rome Miller, vice president; E. J. Cornish, the work horse of the board; W. R. Watson and S. L. Nebie.



GLIMPSE OF A RESIDENCE STREET.

## Making a City to Order

A NEW city is to be born on the Pacific coast within a few months. It will not be of haphazard growth. It has been planned for years in advance, the lines of its growth have been mapped out, and it only remains to set a date for occupation and then wait for it to be peopled.

The Grand Trunk Pacific Railway company, which is building a new transcontinental line across Canada chiefly through virgin territory, is responsible for this city that is to be. It has been christened far in advance of its birth. The city is Prince Rupert, and it is to be the Pacific coast terminus of the new railroad.

Prince Rupert is 550 miles north of Vancouver and only forty miles south of the Alaskan boundary. That is pretty far north, but it is in the same latitude as London and its mean temperature is about the same as London's. By land and sea it is protected by mountains. Its harbor is practically land-locked, but it has a mile wide roadstead for ships.

The projectors of this new seaport went at the choice of a site carefully. The entire north sea coast was searched and every harbor sounded. The best way for the railroad through the mountains had to be considered.

Further, the most available route to Yokohama and the rest of the Far East had to be taken into account. The choice was made four years ago, and since then they have been making plans for the new city. The first subdivision of the town site will be made about May 1 and the public invited to come in and buy.

The steamship route to the new port from the Far East lies through the Dixon entrance into Hecate strait, thence into Chatham sound and Prince Rupert harbor. The harbor is really a strait between Digby island and Prince Rupert island and it extends fourteen miles inland beyond the site of the new city.

The provincial government of British Columbia made a grant of 10,000 acres to the railway company, which bought up 14,000 acres of Indian reserve land, making 24,000 acres for the city to grow in. Probably it will need no more acreage. In fact, it will start out with 2,000 acres only, but that is some space.

The work of planning Prince Rupert began in earnest in May, 1906. Since then surveying and clearing have been carried on simultaneously. The land is cleared now and the town site, the 2,000 acres on which the start is to be made, has been mapped out.

This town has got to grow as the law directs and not as it wills. Streets will not follow cowpaths or Indian trails. It has all been attended to, even to laying out parks and boulevards which may not be needed for half a century.

One of the first steps the engineers took was to employ landscape gardeners, who have produced a plan which combines the utilitarian and the artistic in city building. The landscape artists were Brett & Hall of Boston, who laid out Mount Royal park, Montreal.

If you visit Prince Rupert today you will find a settlement hid-



ALONG THE SOUTHEAST BOULEVARD.

died on the waterfront. It is made up largely of temporary structures in which the engineers and workmen have been housed and fed and provided for. Many of these structures will disappear when the city gets its start. Your idea of the city to come must be had from maps.

These maps show a long waterfront broken by several little bays. A few streets back from the water the land ascends, at first gradually and then abruptly.

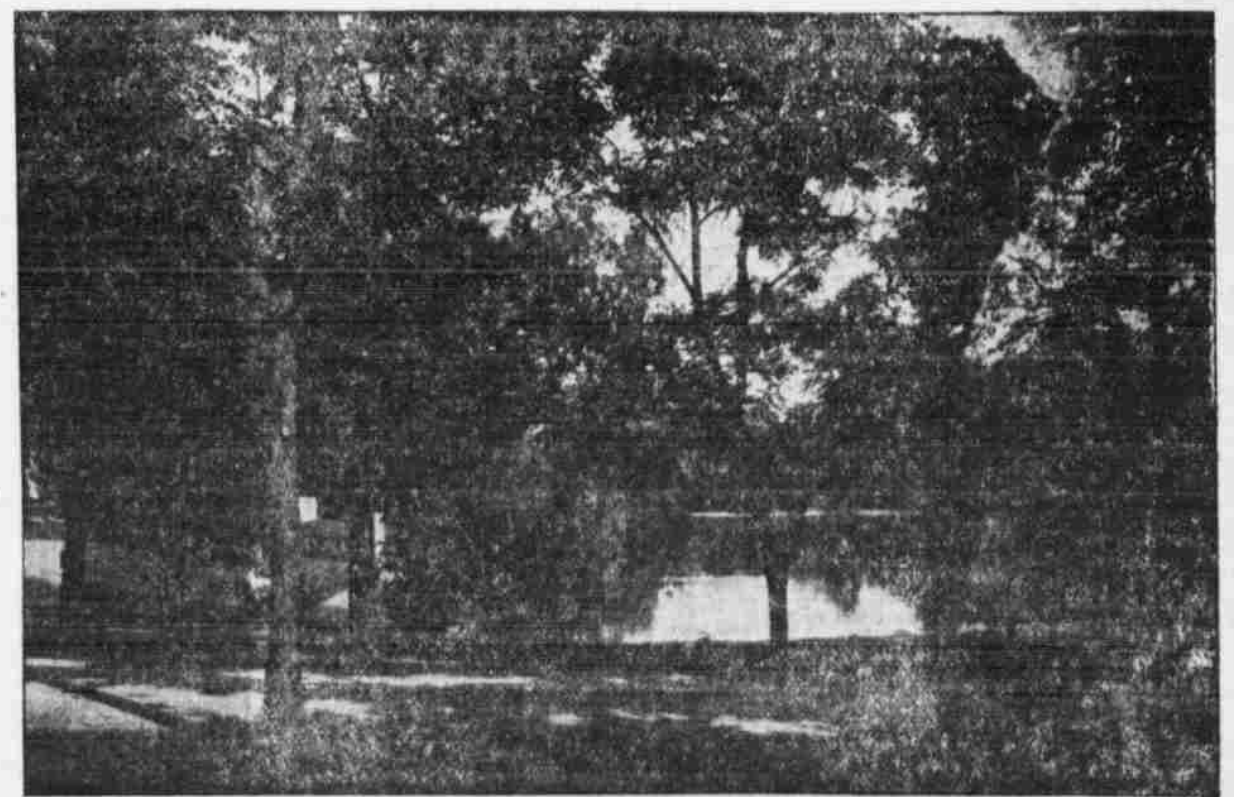
The streets are to go up hill in curves; in fact scarcely half of the streets of this new city will run in straight lines. Most of the thoroughfares are numbered, the avenues generally parallel to the waterfront, the streets at right angles to it. There are many familiar names. Water street, Beach street, Main street; also a Railroad avenue, but no Broadway appears—possibly it is too American.

Here and there where the topography permits

are circles with streets radiating therefrom. Away up on the hillside the Prince Rupert boulevard had been mapped. It curves around above the prospective city, affording (on paper) magnificent views of the harbor and its future array of shipping.

One can easily imagine a second or third generation of the pioneers who themselves are yet to be driving in automobiles along the boulevard and taking in the sights. There are mountains on the opposite shore ready and willing to be looked at, and to the northwest, through an island-studded channel, is the famous Indian village of Metlakatla.

The harbor itself has been mapped by the Dominion government hydrographic survey. It is free from rocks or other obstructions and of sufficient depth to afford good anchorage. The entrance is straight, 2,000 feet in width at the narrowest part, with a minimum depth of thirty-six



BY THE LAKE IN RIVERVIEW PARK.

feet at low tide. A permanent wharf 1,500 feet long has been constructed.

The British Columbia government isn't going to have this new city at the mercy of a corporation. It has taken a strong hand in the work of development. One-quarter of all the land reverts to the province, as also one-quarter of the waterfront, after the townsite has been laid out.

The first inhabitants of this city won't have to worry over public improvements. They will find graded streets, sidewalks and sewers ready for them. The provincial government appropriated \$200,000 for early improvements and ample provision will have been made in advance for a population of 10,000 people. As the population increases the improvements will keep well in advance. The gradual slope of the land, with an occasional abrupt rise, has made the drainage problem very easy of solution.

The town, of course, will have to wait for the

railway, but it is creeping across the northwest prairies. It is 1,754 miles from Winnipeg to Prince Rupert over the Grand Trunk Pacific route, and trains are now running between Winnipeg and Wainwright, Alberta, 700 1/2 miles. The time table bears the usual legend, "Subject to change without notice," and in this case the change usually means the addition of a few more stations to the west every month or so. Construction from the Prince Rupert end will begin soon.

Transportation facilities will give Prince Rupert its excuse for being, and many industries wait upon the completion of the railway. The fishing industry expects to take a jump forward.

The salmon pack last year in the Skeena river, twelve miles south of Prince Rupert, was valued at \$1,000,000 and gave employment to 5,000 persons. This product has gone to Vancouver and Victoria by water, but when the railway comes much of it will go through Prince Rupert.