

## CHAPTER EIGHT

THE QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLANDSMASSET AND SKIDEGATE

The communities of Masset and Skidegate cannot be evaluated in isolation from the total economic and social situation of which they are a part, that is the complex archipelago of the Queen Charlotte Islands.

The Islands are large, covering together approximately two and a quarter million acres, spread over a total of more than one hundred and fifty separate islands, all approximately eighty-five miles off the West Coast of Northern British Columbia. The environment is wild, unique and extremely beautiful. Because of the warm Japanese current, the climate is relatively mild (34°-64°F) and flora and fauna proliferate in this area where rainfall is 50" over 212 days per year. For more than two centuries the Islands have attracted many visitors, explorers and settlers. The current population is, however, only about 5,500 people, who are resident in twelve more-or-less permanent settlements, most of them on the northern Graham Island.

History:

Historically, the Islands were first contacted by Spanish adventurers who in 1774 were concerned with the possibility of a Russian territorial advance down the Alaskan Panhandle. The first fully recorded British visit to the Islands was made in 1787 by Captain George Dixon, who named the Islands after his own ship. He established the possibility of an extensive fur trade based on sea otter pelts which he and others exchanged for trade goods with the local Haida tribe. For the next forty or fifty years a very large trade in otter fur drew European traders to the Islands, and later into the interior of British Columbia via the Naas Valley. Artifacts of artistic value were also traded by the local Natives, and have been universally regarded ever since as

objects of exceptional beauty. By the end of the second decade of the Nineteenth Century, the fur trade had declined, as the indiscriminate slaughter of animals led to their virtual extinction.

Before contact, the Queen Charlottes were the exclusive territory of the Haida who are widely recognized in anthropological literature as a group exhibiting phenomenal artistic creativity. In 1800 there were an estimated 7,000 Haida living in the Islands. Their tribal system was characterized at that time by an elaborate and well-functioning political system based on matrilineal kinship. Their economy was based on the creative use of the great surpluses of furs, lumber, and metals such as copper, and traces of silver and gold, which all occurred locally. They also had bold and vigorous patterns of military and naval organization which enabled them to raid the other tribes of the North-West coast with considerable success, often taking slaves in the process.

The natural resource critical for all these endeavours was the local cedar, which was both straight grained and soft, and was put to use in building war canoes of legendary size and range, totem poles, and the long houses in which clans and lineages lived and worked collectively. In 1840 there were approximately 6,600 Haida living in twelve main villages on the Islands and although some Whites had settled there briefly, there was no stable white community.

All this changed with the first Gold Rush of 1851. Local representatives of the Hudson's Bay Company had bartered with Haida for rocks containing gold and in that year took away \$1,000 worth. Knowledge of this find became widespread, and by 1859 the Islands had been inundated with gold seekers who, when they found that the gold was in reality sparse, turned to other forms of mineral exploration, particularly copper.

From the early 1800's a variety of diseases to which the Haida had no immunity were introduced, including tuberculosis and venereal diseases. But the most potent killer was

successive waves of small pox which decimated the population. By 1900 it is calculated that the large and vigorous Haida population had been reduced to 600 people, and little remained of their strong and independent social, political and economic organization. In addition, many members of the tribe, but particularly the younger men and women, had been persuaded to move south to the new city of Victoria on Vancouver Island in pursuit of a modern way of life.

Methodist missionaries were deeply distressed by the situation which had developed during the 1300's, and in 1873 the first mission was established at Skidegate. This gradually became the most stable community of the era, both for the 200 Haida of the area and the relatively settled Whites. In due course, the disease decimated remnants of once well-populated Haida villages moved into the Skidegate area, and embarked on the difficult but ultimately creative process of reconstructing a social structure which had links with the traditional past, but could not be a reproduction of it because the overall environment had changed so tremendously. The remainder of the Haida, now about 1,000 people, have consolidated in the village of Masset in the North but do not appear to have made as creative an adaptation to the new circumstances in terms of their political and family organization. One reason for this may well be that Masset village is constantly subjected to great fluctuations and waves of largely itinerant Whites seeking to exploit the various resources of the island. At the same time, in its earlier period, it lacked the continuous stabilizing influence of the mission community.

Land ownership on the Islands changed significantly in 1865, six years before British Columbia officially became a province of Canada. At that time Josesh Trutch, acting on behalf of the Colony of British Columbia, granted the Queen Charlotte Coal Company of Victoria 5,000 acres in the Skidegate inlet area. A local chronicler (Dalzell, 1967:105.)

records:

From this time all decisions, permissions and policies affecting the Charlottes were made in Ottawa or in the capital city of B.C. Needs and hopes of resident Islanders were to be of little consequence - except perhaps in the golden glow of pre-election sollicitudes.

From 1865 onwards, scores, perhaps hundreds, of businesses or mining ventures were embarked upon, invested in, and found to be, on the whole, uneconomic. Amongst these were coal, copper and iron. Several small businesses tried to exploit the produce of the ocean, notably clams, dogfish, liver oil, and fish, but these ventures seldom survived for extended periods of time, although many of them provided incomes of an intermittent kind and amount for both local settlers and immigrant labourers.

It is worth noting that in the early 1900's, Japanese entrepreneurs mined copper in the Jedway area for several years, but were only able to do so by dint of importing Japanese labour, for by this time, the Haida were physically and morally decimated by disease and the subsequent social disorder.

Between 1905 to 1914 there was another very large influx, both of individuals and business ventures, all looking for a variety of mineral and other resources. They came predominantly from North Western U.S.A., from Winnipeg, from the British Isles, and from the Yukon-Alaska gold fields, which were failing during this period. Many small farm sites were established, surveyed and settled, but later died out. This population wave washed away from the Islands after the beginning of World War I, as had the previous waves of potential settlers and migratory single men.

By 1914, the only even partially viable industries in the Masset Inlet area (New Masset, the home of the Haida Natives group, had been founded in 1909) were three struggling sawmills - one in Masset, one in Sewell (a township now defunct), and one in Port Clements. In the last two years of

World War I Sitka spruce wood suddenly became extremely valuable because it was used in airplane manufacture. Fourteen lumber camps sprang into existence almost over night, but at the conclusion of the war the market for Sitka spruce collapsed, and most of the camps, and their occupants, vanished.

In 1918 a determined effort to establish a more stable lumbering operation was made by the Masset Lumber Company. This employed 400 men in 8 lumber camps set up by the company, and also milled the lumber produced by six independent operators. Again, a significant proportion of this labour force appears to have been oriental. The company was bought out in 1922 by the Los Angeles Lumber Company, and, typical of many similar operations, it ceased business in 1925.

The Depression Years of the 1920's and 1930's were a period of severe reduction of population in the Islands, But also one of community consolidation on the part of these settlers who were determined to remain because they had chosen the Charlottes as their homes.

A local commentator states:

Depression was a word which applied to financial conditions only - not morale. These were the years of strong community spirit when volunteer labour achieved wonders in the building of halls and putting on of entertainments. The thirties were the heyday of the community clubs, which made a valuable contribution to the social life of the settlements. (Dalzell, 1967:295.)

Also, by 1935, prices had dropped so low that:

The fishermen, realizing that they were at the mercy of the large companies decided to form a co-operative to gain bargaining power . . . and formed a Co-operative Association . . . . The Association prospered and added new members regularly until 1939 when it amalgamated with the Prince Rupert Co-op. (Dalzell, 1967:298.)

The small but important sources of local income that persisted during the Depression Years were fishing and the high quality local lumber which even in that period was marketable on a small scale.

The twenties and thirties were the years of the small logger. As long as there were any markets, gypo logging was a good way to make a living . . . most logging took place within easy access of the water, using A-frames, coaldeck, and skylining methods of operation. (Dalzell, 1967:303.)

At the end of this period there were two fairly clearly established and distinct social groups on the Island. The White settlers constituted one group. They had managed to survive the Depression Years by virtue of hard work at whatever marginal opportunities presented themselves, largely logging and fishing, coupled in many cases, with subsistence gardens. With the generous surpluses of the ocean, and local game, plus the produce of their own gardens, these settlers seldom went hungry, though they might well lack tangible cash incomes of any size.

The other significant group on the North Island was the remnants of the Haidas. Divided into two groups, they lived at some geographical and social distance from one another. Both groups were gradually expanding in size, reversing the population reduction trends that had dominated them until the early 1900's. These groups also lived a largely subsistence life, but at a lower level than that of Whites because they lacked even the small scale and primitive capital to which Whites had access. The Skidegate band, which was the smaller of the two, appears to have had a more stable social and political organization and to have had more successful commercial and personal interactions with the white settlers. The settlement at Masset seemed particularly susceptible to the vagaries of the population flows onto and away from the Islands through the port and harbour of Masset.

Since World War II the economy of the Queen Charlotte Islands has been radically transformed in many of the same ways as the North West Mainland. The expansion of technology and the substitution of capital for labour which is characteristic of the whole Western industrial world has shaped the character of the economic and social development of even the most remote hinterland areas. Small scale entrepreneurs with limited capital have increasingly been eliminated or absorbed by the larger corporations, many of which are multi-national in origin and scope, and import labour from other parts of B.C. and Canada.

#### Current Impacts - Forestry

In the forestry industry this trend became apparent in the late 1950's on the Charlottes as well as on the mainland. Traditional forestry department policies for the preservation of the capital resource of the forests in the long term shifted to the modern concept of rotating clear felling in order to maintain, in theory, a sustained yield over time. This basic policy shift created the environment in which the large forestry corporations, with a capital intensive technology, could reap very large profits from logging operations on the Islands, which had formerly been too remote to be exploited economically. No large mill has ever been built on the Islands, the dense and high quality lumber was initially taken south in very large log booms. Today the more common technique is the use of self-dumping log barges.

The three large corporations involved in the Queen Charlotte Islands are Macmillan-Bloedell, Crown Zellerbach, and Rayonier Canada. Each, by virtue of size, dominates one of the permanent settlements on the Islands. In consequence, the settlements have a moderate range of services. In addition, each company runs a modern logging camp. Macmillan-Bloedell has its logging camp at Juskatla, and the more settled portion of their labour force is located in Port Clements

half way up the Northern Island which has a population of approximately 400 and is in all essentials a company town. They are, in addition, currently putting in a \$1.4 million dryland sorting yard at Queen Charlotte City. Crown Zellerbach is focussed on the town of Sandspit at the northern end of the South island, which is also the air base. Royanier Canada's main logging operations are concentrated on Crimshewa Inlet, half an hour's drive from Sandspit. During 1979 they are "upgrading" their operations there by making them more capital intensive.

Operating out of these three centres and covering both the South and North Islands, there is a very extensive network of logging roads which are used by heavy trucks which bring logs into the central dumping and booming grounds where they are sorted and loaded onto the self-dumping barges.

Together three major corporations employ approximately 900 people, a number which fluctuates quite considerably with changes in the level of international demand for lumber and lumber products.

The attitude of the older settlers to these large-scale forestry operations is on the whole favourable.

Logging in the Charlottes, today as elsewhere, is far different from the earlier "cut and get out" policies . . . . Logging payrolls contribute greatly to the economy of the Islands and logging operators who before contributed nothing in the way of community effort, now go to great lengths to provide settlements which are conducive to performance. Employees are encouraged to bring their wives, raise their families and live a normal life, never before possible for a logger . . . . Managers and superintendents as well as ordinary working men are taking part in programmes for Island progress and improvement in living standards. They are on hospital boards, support the newly formed Q.C.I. Chamber of Commerce, and take an active interest in most community efforts. (Dalzell, 1967:305.)

In 1976 there were four small, locally controlled saw - mills which cut lumber for local consumption, but they provided employment for only six persons. One of these was in Queen Charlotte City.

A further local employment possibility that is partially independent of the large corporations may develop from the logging of Western Red Cedar, which is the second most common species on the Islands.

During the 1950's and 1960's, cedar was not highly valued by the logging companies, which concentrated on spruce and fir, and the cedar was often left where it had been felled. Today cedar has become very fashionable in West Coast housing and the logging companies have returned to these logs that were once discarded and are lifting the best of them out by helicopter.

Salvage logging of this kind is not presently limited to tree farm licence holders, that is, the three big companies, so there are some small scale opportunities for such salvage logging, and the logs can be used locally.

A small mobile cedar sawmill is proposed near Port Clements, and two firms in Port Clements and Queen Charlotte City are proposing (1979) to establish cedar shake mills. Near Masset, Queen Charlotte Islands Forest Products is establishing a small sawmill, and in 1979 Canada Manpower conducted a feasibility study of a cedar shake mill in Haida, the Indian reservation near Masset. A LEAP grant has just been given to the Haida at Masset to help them start a cedar shake mill. If this proves successful it should strengthen the economic base of the Masset Band. However, the success of this shake mill will in the long run depend both on the capacity of the Natives to mobilize themselves politically to ensure that the supply of raw materials they need continues to be available to them, and on the continuance of the current very high price for cedar shakes.

The forestry industry as a whole on the Islands provides three categories of occupant. The upper managerial levels tend to reside there for terms of several years during which they gain local experience and interact in largely paternalistic terms with the local population.

There is, in addition, a large and predominantly impermanent labour force of men without their families who are recruited in the southern metropolitan areas and reside in the modern and comfortable camps which have superseded the old bunk houses. However, labour turnover in this group is high.

In the study of labour instability conducted by B.C. Research (Skeena Manpower Development Committee, 1978.), lumber and wood products industry on the Islands was found to have a labour turnover rate of 161% in 1973 116% in 1974, 72% in 1975, 94% in 1976. The reduction in the labour turnover was thought to be a result of a depressed market for labour, not of any intrinsic changes in attitudes about the desirability of work on the Islands or of community life there.

The costs of the turnover are of some concern to the logging companies. In mining companies the turnover cost per employee in 1972 was \$1,012.00, (McMillan et al, 1974:107.). This was based on a separation cost of \$584.00 and a hiring cost of \$428.00 per employee. There is no reason to suppose that the logging industry in a remote area such as the Queen Charlottes does not face comparable costs. In addition, "to date no information on the public cost of labour turnover has been calculated. This would include the relationship of labour turnover to mental illness, crime, alcohol and drug abuse, loss of community leadership and social dysfunction." (Farstad, 1975.)

The third category of occupants consists of some permanently resident local people.

White permanent residents, despite their desire to do so, are not always able to obtain work in the forestry industry, because, like much of the population of the Pacific Northwest, their formal educational qualifications are lower than the B.C. average, and the local managerial echelons of the large lumber companies tend to seek fully trained and certified rather than merely skilled labour.

The situation of Natives is exacerbated by the reality that their educational qualifications are lower even than those of Whites. However, members of the Skidegate Band have been able to take some advantage of opportunities in the logging industry because Queen Charlotte City is close enough to Skidegate so they can reside at home. Natives of Masset, on the other hand, are disadvantaged, both because of their less coherent social and educational organization, but also because the closest logging operation is at Port Clements which is not within daily commuting distance.

Current Impacts - Mining

The other substantial local resource which has been exploited with some consistency is copper. Westfob Mines, a wholly owned subsidiary of Falconbridge Nickel Mines Ltd. is situated on Moresby Island, and the town site of Tasu is on Gowing Island. The open pit mine was originally opened in 1967 and it was later expanded to add an underground operation. The mine employs about 175 workers. The labour turnover rate at Tasu is high also. In 1973 it was 132%, in 1974 it was 151%, in 1975 it was 106%, and in 1976 it was 114%.

Westfob Mines produces approximately half a million tons of iron concentrate a year, 300,000 of which is shipped to

Japan, 200,000 tons to Gilmore Steel in Portland, Oregon, and approximately 45,000 tons to Australia.

A local worker, a mill operator at Tasu, comments in this way about life there:

Life in Tasu is what you make of it. It can be very boring and it can be very nice. The worst part is the weather. Isolation and the weather; rain, day in and day out, everything is grey. But like today, when the sun shines - fantastic:

Everybody feels sorry for himself being here, so everybody tries to make the best of it. A friendly atmosphere: We are all within the same age group, so all are productive people, and children; no old people. It's not a normal town; it's a mining camp. Everybody works.

Mind you, there are many people whom I don't know; they work underground and are single guys. They stay in the bunkhouses and don't cook for themselves. You don't see them at the store; at the bar, maybe, but we don't go there too often.

After you have been here for a while you don't like to make close friends. People come, then they leave again. We may all have different reasons for being here, but for all of us it is to make money. Once people have made enough money they get fed up with the isolation and take off. So you can't become too close and keep on doing it and doing it.

I am from Copenhagen; met my husband downtown Tasu. He and I stick to ourselves. We are building our own furniture; this is our first home. Then we sit and talk and make plans and drawings. Once we leave here, I'd like to live in a normal place, buy a nice house and stay there for the rest of my life.

(Steltzer, U. and Kerr, Catherine, 1979:19.)

A more typical, short lifespan mine was that opened by the Jedway Iron Ore Company Ltd. which was formed in 1961 with its headquarters in Vancouver. It had a contract with Sumitome Shoji Kaish Ltd. of Japan to supply 2,000,000 long tons of iron ore over a 5-year period. The new town was built on the old abandoned town site and in 1967 was described as "a pretty small town with comfortable living quarters for 278

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peop

le". (Dalzell, 1967:305.) The mine was closed down in

1968, the buildings razed or moved, and all signs of the town have virtually vanished.

#### Commercial Fishing

Commercial fishing, which was once one of the main industries of the Islands, has declined since World War II. Originally, the Haida found ready occupation in both fishing and in boat building. Gradually, however, the Haida were displaced by Whites. In 1976, 155 commercial vessels were based in the area, predominantly in Masset, and provided employment for 269 people. There is a fish processing and canning plant at Masset which provides seasonal employment for 50 people.

The capital investment necessary for successful commercial fishing has expanded greatly during the last two decades. The industry is now fiercely competitive and the small scale fishermen without elaborate equipment have been almost entirely eliminated. This has affected the local Native populations adversely, since their access to both capital and the requisite high technology skills has been limited. Today the Haida, who used once to be the most famed fishermen and warriors of the Pacific North West, only go to sea as crew members on the boats of others.

#### Current Impacts - The Armed Forces Base

The small village of Masset has also been very significantly affected by the building there of a large Armed Forces base. Before this impact occurred, the settlement was made up of two units, the village of 'New' Masset which had been incorporated in 1967, and which in 1966 had a population of approximately 550 Whites, and the Native Reserve or 'Old' Masset which at that time probably had about 450 permanent Native residents, although the formal band membership would have been approximately double that. The fishing industry provided the main economic base, and the fishermen's wharf

at Delkatla Slough was the permanent marine base of a significant number of Queen Charlotte fishermen who lived in the village with their families. Most fishermen were White because even a decade ago the capital investment required to survive in this extremely competitive industry was extensive. The hostility between the Whites and the Natives was then, and is now, quite often openly expressed.

The old town of Masset, which is often described as "the Reservation", contains the remnants of twelve former villages which had been scattered over the North Island but whose populations had been decimated by small pox and other diseases during the Nineteenth Century. The amalgamated village is more unified in physical appearance than in reality, as the twelve chiefs of the old villages have descendents who still see themselves in most internal situations as members of twelve small factions.

The relationship between Natives and Whites is frequently tense and memories of old injuries are very long. For example, in 1965 a cannery truck overturned, with one Haida being killed and several injured. The consequent tension was very great, and did not subside until ten years later when the cannery went bankrupt.

This was the uneasy social and economic situation when in the late 1960's an Armed Forces Base was built in the community of New Masset. This was to be an experiment in an "open" base, with military personnel being incorporated into the wider residential community. Local stores were assured that the Department of National Defence would not duplicate facilities they were already providing. Local sources assert, however, that these undertakings have not been honoured. An extensive set of central facilities was built. These facilities comply with the standards and expectations of the urban cultures of Canada, but in this remote setting appear to be inappropriately grandiose. In addition, the more permanent of the Armed Forces personnel who are married live in housing that is very noticeably

higher in quality than the local norm. The effect of this imposition of urban housing and recreational facilities on a small, remote, and socio-economically depressed northern community has been to transform much of it into an instant slum by comparison. Local aspirations and resentments have become significantly heightened as a result.

in addition, the lives and attitudes of the personnel at the base are much the same as they are in other bases in Canada. They perceive themselves to be living essentially within an elite military career framework, which at best views civilian community life as largely irrelevant to them. This general attitude of superiority is understood and resisted by both Whites and Natives in the local community who several years ago showed a rare solidarity and gained even rarer notoriety when they demonstrated rather forcefully against the military presence in their midst.

The relations between the military and both the logging and fishing factions of the local community of New Masset are also strained. As a consequence of the demonstrations against the Base, some of the Base's athletic and other facilities have been opened to the public. The reality is, however, that few of the local residents feel really comfortable in the facility. The exception is the very small local managerial and professional group, who, like the military personnel, also see Masset as a stage in their professional advancement rather than as a permanent home.

For the Haida the base has become a major source of resistance and conflict, and in 1974 there was an Armed Forces dance which was opened for the public including the Haida. A fight started, and a near riot evolved. Conditions have improved somewhat recently perhaps due to a major public relations effort by both the commanding officers and the mayor and council. The government claims that more jobs have been created by the Base, but the locals claim that Armed Forces personnel and their wives frequently engage in moon-

lighting and this has resulted in a reduction in the number of jobs available.

Currently the population of the village, which includes the Base, is approximately 1,500, most of whom are Whites. The population of the adjacent Native reservation is approximately 1,000. All these populations are plagued by internal divisiveness. While the latent hostility between the military and the rest of the population is the most evident, there is also hostility between various factions within old Masset based on the traditional patterns of interaction, and within New Masset between those who base their living on the fishing industry and those who depend on logging.

The overall situation has been exacerbated by a policy decision of the Federal government in the 1960's to integrate Native children into the local White school system. The old Masset reserve school goes to Grade IV and then pupils are bussed to the integrated school in New Masset. Haida children make up more than 50% of the children in the school and there has been friction both between the children and between the other segments of the community on the issue of appropriate educational standards and curricula.

To summarize this far: the White population of the Queen Charlottes is divided into several largely discrete social groups, each focussed on a local settlement which is serviced by a small population of local entrepreneurs. These are the lumber companies quartered at Juskatla camp, Port Clements, Queen Charlotte City, Cumshewa, and Sandspit. The mining company dominates Moresby. The deep sea fishing community is focussed on Masset, as is the Armed Forces Base.

A small scattering of the older settlers who are attempting to live in part by agriculture reside on large acreages and some of them attempt to ranch. However, the local agricultural base is extremely precarious. The

British Columbia Regional Index reports that

attempts to develop the lowlands on Graham Island for farming have been largely unsuccessful because of distance to markets, climate, drainage, and clearing difficulties. Most of the improved land is used for pasture or hay. Small quantities of locally grown beef, pigs, poultry, potatoes, and other products supplement "imported" food supplies. In 1976 there were seven Census farms (those on one acre or more, with sales of \$1,200 or more in 1975) covering 1,756 acres. None of the farms can be considered viable units. (1978:642.)

The lack of economic viability of local farming should not be assumed to mean that there are few local subsistence resources. In fact, the reverse is true. The Islands have such large numbers of small deer that there is no closed season for hunting. The sea and the rivers are full of fish, and shellfish and game birds also abound. It is possible to grow good and prolific vegetables in the summer. Individuals and families are thus able to live quite well off the countryside even though they may lack significant cash incomes and high status consumer goods. There has been a small but significant addition to the Island's population because of this fact and some of the late 1960 "hippy" generation have settled permanently, and frequently concern themselves with environmental issues. They are not popular with many members of the older settler group.

#### Current Imnacts - The Transportation Issue

All residents on the Islands are seriously affected by the availability of transport to and from the mainland. Northland, an all weather shipping service, functioned until October 1976, and was subsidized by the Federal government (see note later). In order to keep commodity prices low enough to compare with the lower mainland, it serviced both Stewart and the Charlottes.

The Northland Navigation Company service was terminated in 1976 under the following circumstances, which are set out in "The Pacific North Coast: An Economic Assessment" by the Skeena-Queen Charlotte Regional District, p.63.

After removing the \$4 million subsidy to Northland the Federal Government announced it would give an \$8 million grant to the B.C. government and transfer responsibility for coastal shipping to the Province. A large portion of that grant was used to subsidize passenger rates on the Southern ferries servicing Vancouver Island to the Lower Mainland. Local prices skyrocketed by at least 70% "causing tremendous economic stress".

Retail prices in Masset have been driven to nearly double the price that the shopper in Vancouver has to pay.

A 100 lb. sack of potatoes costs about \$7.50 wholesale in Vancouver, freight costs to Masset increase this cost by \$5.90. Feed suppliers in Vancouver sell a bale of hay (110 lbs.) at around \$5.00, freight costs to Masset increase this cost by \$6.49, thereby more than doubling the price . . . . If transportation charges continue at the present level, a large percentage of residents and industry will leave our coastal communities. The residents will be unable to afford the high cost of living, and some industry will be unable to compete anymore. This vicious circle will make ghost towns of our beautiful coast settlements.

(Brief regarding freight, passenger and vehicle transportation to Queen Charlotte Islands prepared by village of Port Clements and village of Masset.)

Attempts to solve this very real transportation problem are likely to provide a new and potentially devastating impact on the whole island complex, through a large and very sudden influx of the tourist trade. We deal with this issue at the end of this section under "Potential Impacts".

Masset and Skidegate

The Natives, who constitute half the population of the Islands, are still concentrated in Skidegate and Masset.

The Skidegate band has a population of approximately 350, and

Skidegate Mission is described as "very progressive and was one of the first on the Island to have light and water facilities. Fortunately timber sales have made this community one of the wealthiest also, and under its three man council affairs have been wisely and carefully guided. Carving of argillite is as skillful as ever and the totem poles and curios created by these artists are in world demand. (Dalzell, 1967:315.) Many Haida artifacts, both past and present, are housed in the Regional Museum near Skidegate. There is in the village an active and continuing revival of interest in old traditions, symbols, and skills.

The Masset band has not been as successful in creating a substantial independent economic base. Two factors seem to have affected the social vitality and economic viability of the band. They are largely excluded from the relatively highly paid logging jobs which are available elsewhere on the Island because the nearest logging operations are too far for easy commuting and Native life-styles do not easily accept camp life. They have also lacked the capital and entrepreneurial skills which have been fostered by the Methodist Mission at Skidegate. The regular local work available is in the cannery, which is seasonal, relatively poorly paid, and generally unstable. Despite the Federal government's decision to integrate Haida children into the school at New Masset after Grade IV, the level of local prejudice against them is high, and is perhaps exacerbated by the fact that in the school situation the Haida have dominant numbers.

Specific documentary data on social pathology is sparse, but it is perhaps significant that the alcoholism rate of the Queen Charlottes is consistently higher than that of the rest of the Pacific North West, where alcoholism is widely recognized to be a social problem of significant dimensions.

#### Potential Impacts - The Ferry Service and Tourism

The B.C. Ferry Corporation, a Crown Corporation of the Government, has agreed to provide a twice-weekly ferry service between Prince Rupert and the Queen Charlottes using one of the ferries which normally runs between Nanaimo and Vancouver. The ferry has to be modified somewhat and it is uncertain when the modification will be complete. The recent ferry accident in Active Pass leaves the fleet shorthanded and this may further delay the provision of ferry service to the Queen Charlottes. Nevertheless, it appears that the decision has been made and the Islands will be impacted in a major way by the opening up of access to them. It was originally assumed that the ferry service would run between Prince Rupert and Masset since that is the shortest distance between the mainland and the Islands. It seems, however, that the terminal will be at Queen Charlotte City near Skidegate Inlet.

The provision of a car ferry service will not affect significantly the high price of transporting commodities, which currently come in one weekly barge from Prince Rupert at considerable cost. Passenger ferries are not designed for cargo carrying and can usually accommodate only a limited number of trailers or semi-trailers, and this is a less economic way of transporting goods than by barge and is not likely to reduce commodity prices.

At present, the majority of the Islanders perceive the ferry service as a means whereby they can escape the Island cheaply and effectively for a vacation or an occasional shopping trip to Prince Rupert. There seemed, at the time

this research was done, to be little understanding of the likely effects on the Islands of a large influx of incoming users of the ferry. Prince Rupert is already the terminus for tourists going to or from Alaska and a side trip to the Queen Charlottes might well become a popular excursion for this growing traffic. Many of the tourists in the North West travel in campers, and frequently carry boats. The Islands are quite unprepared for a large influx of tourists of this kind. There are beaches on the East coast and around Rose Point to Masset, which are so magnificent that they make the famous Long Beach on the West coast of Vancouver Island pale by comparison. However, these beaches are completely unprotected, there are no licensed or controlled camping grounds, and no systems in place, or apparently being contemplated on a significant scale, to protect the beautiful and abundant local scenery, animals, and fish.

Nor are there currently adequate local motel and hotel facilities. Two of the Islands' three hotels burned down in 1978, and the few motels have limited facilities. Were new hotels to be built they would face the same economic problems that proved almost insurmountable for their predecessors, a very short season in the summer, and a winter climate which, while it is mild, is almost continuously rainy or misty.

A further problem of significance is the road system. There are some miles of road on the North Island which are suitable for tourist traffic, but most of the island's extensive road system is not well signposted because it is designed for and used by huge logging trucks which live within a road hog ethos peculiarly their own, and are potentially quite dangerous to camper or trailer drivers, who are not experienced in this hazardous variation of the rule of the road.

The only organized group on the Island which currently seems to be aware of potential problems is the Skidegate Indian Band which had opposed the coming of the ferry. Now

that it is clear that the ferry will come, they are seriously considering trying to adapt to the consequences by creating a well regulated camp ground on their Reserve. The effects of a large influx of tourist traffic on Masset, which is close to both the best beaches and good docking facilities, is likely to be adverse, since this community is conspicuously low on all the three dimensions we have been observing, economic viability, social vitality, and political efficacy.

#### Potential Impacts - Gold at Port Clements

The recent spectacular increase in the price of gold and the likelihood that over the longer term the metal is likely to hold or even increase in value has caused a re-evaluation of the economic viability of the gold deposits at Port Clements. It has been announced that the mine might possibly be brought back into production by Christmas, and could employ as many as 600 workers. Since Port Clements currently has a population of just over 300, it is clear that the impact of the mine will be enormous. In late August we interviewed the town administrator who stated that they had been given no forewarning of the impending impact and lacked the facilities which would be necessary to deal with such a large and sudden growth of their population.

Gold is also being discovered in other places on the Islands, and it seems likely that some of it will in fact be mined, for as long as the ore bodies last.

### Conclusion

Throughout their history the Queen Charlotte Islands have been subjected to repeated impacts of a variety of kinds. The result is a series of separate, isolated, privatized communities most of whose inhabitants have no personal commitment to the long term welfare of the Islands' social or ecological well-being. The threshold levels on all our dimensions are notably low in almost all the subcommunities within which we made enquiries and conspicuously so in Masset.

Considerable insights could, in our view, be gained from a longitudinal study of this mixture of varied communities held together with fragile ties arising from their common geographical isolation. All will be faced for the first time with a common impact once the regular ferry service is established and some will probably be affected by an extreme form of the "boom or bust" syndrome if gold is to be mined extensively. Also, a substantial recession in the U.S. and Canadian housing markets in the 1980's could affect even the most solid source of local income, the logging companies.