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SPOT NEWS

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Western Vancouver Island Industrial Heritage Society

Issue 52



February 2013



“No. 11” Restoration Project Nears Completion

(left) K.G. Campbell in the cab of “No. 11” (1942 GE diesel) on its first move into the Yard, Nov. 21, 2012. R. Hurst and S. Stump check some lines.

(below) “No. 11” meets “8427” (1954 RS-3 Alco) The “No. 11” does test run in the Yard while RS-3 does switching exercises with BCIT students in the Port Alberni Yard, November 25, 2012.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: 7 p.m. February 19, 2013, Echo Centre in Port Alberni.

ALBERNI PACIFIC RAILWAY—2012

The railroading year ended with the annual "Santa Train" on December 3-4. Seven of eight runs were 'Sold Out', in spite of the dismal, rainy weekend.

The 1929 "Baldwin" made 83 trips this year, with no breakdowns. It operated four days a week in the summer, as well as doing charters and special events, such as the "Picnic Excursion" to the Mill as part of the City's Centennial celebrations in August

The RS-3, our 1954 "ALCO" diesel, worked 38 days, including 27 long days for BCIT "Conductor Training" classes during 2012.

The restoration of the "No. 11", a 1942 GE diesel that used to work switching cars for "Alberni Pulp & Paper", is nearing completion. K.G. (Soup) Campbell has led the project, with hundreds of hours contributed. New brushes are still needed for the generators and the air compressors still need sorting out. Sterling Stump, Vic Laughlin and Hugh Grist also put significant hours into the work. *[Photos: on the cover]*

Crewing APR trains is done by Gary Murton (the Pres.) There are currently several trainee Conductors and a trainee Fireman. Pat Williamson was certified as an "Engineer" in 2012; Jonathan Peck was certified as a "Fireman". Rod Gledhill also performed a lot of the firing duties during the summer, before going to work for the CPR as a Conductor on the Mainland.

In 2012, the APR hosted 6 groups of BCIT Conductor trainees in three sessions, for a total of 36 students. Each group is here for five days of intense activity. There are four APR members present every day: Engineer/RTC—Rollie Hurst; Counterpart to BCIT Instructor—David Hooper; a "Cab Conductor", to keep watch on the blind side of the locomotive; and a "Ground Conductor", to keep students and equipment safe from that angle

The courses were in January, March and November and they continue to be a major source of revenue. This revenue is what has funded the restoration of the "No. 11". The next course will be in early April.



Santa Train Crew 2012

(Cab) - Rod Gledhill, John Land (Enr.)
(l. to r.) G. Murton, J. Heid, R. Lord, L. St. Thomas,
H. Grist, K. Hunter, Santa D. Taberner, B & L Brown.
Elves: Auburn Heid and Emily.

Photo: D. Hooper



FIREMAN Trainee

Les Stevens in the cab.

BCIT CONDUCTOR TRAINEES

with APR crew at McLean Mill.
(from the top left): Hugh Grist, John Land, Rollie Hurst, Jonathan Peck, David Hooper. BCIT Instructor, John Wetzel *(front)* in yellow.

Photo: J. Peck



Editor's Notes

Although it is winter and the railroad is on "Maintenance Mode", members are busy at various and diverse tasks, including getting ready for the 2013 season. A "Steam-Up" is scheduled for July 20-21 at McLean Mill this summer, featuring the 1917 "Farquhar" steam tractor currently under restoration. As well as the "Farquhar", there is the steam train, steam donkey and steam sawmill on site. There will be steam machinery from Blackstaffs, from Duncan Forest Museum, from Ken Fyfe and hopefully, a steam car or two. Mark this weekend on your calendars! Coastal Community Credit Union is sponsoring this unique Island event, as well as the "Antique Truck Show" on Labour Day weekend.

A lot of the work at the I.H. Centre continues to be funded by "Community Gaming Grants" from the Province of B.C. Readers will also note that several pages of this "Spot News" have been sponsored by local businesses. A big "Thank you" to Larry Spencer (Probyn Log Ltd.), Don Mallon of "Southside Auto Supply", Dave Timmons of "Smitty's" and Carmen of "Beijing Grand Restaurant".



MEMBERS at WORK

LIMO SERVICE?

Member Alan Williamson chauffeured Premier Clark to the Truck Loggers Convention from the Legislative Buildings in the 1967 EXPO "Hayes" HDX.

Photos: Bob East



Tracy Golden finishes painting "Alberni Pacific" on model skeleton car built and donated by Ray Barron.



"Just a lube and oil, please."
Andrew (r.) and Ben Schievink working on transmission of 1928 Chev Firetruck.



(l.) Mike Hobson works on 1955 "Nanaimo River Hayes".
(r.) Decorating coaches for 'Santa Runs' - (l.- r) H. Grist, K. Hunter, J. Land, R. Gledhill, B. Simpson (ladder)

Photos: D. Hooper



GROWING UP IN A LOGGING CAMP - Memories from Childhood

Don Watt grew up in the 1940's, near the end of the era of the big steam rail logging camps of Vancouver Island. His family moved to Franklin River Camp "B" at Parson Creek in 1943, when he was four years old. They moved to the "new Camp B" in 1946. Camp "B" was once reputed to be the largest logging camp in Canada and it was one of the last big camps to close down, in the 1980's. The photos in this section are from Don's collection. Any errors are due to the Editor.

* * * * *

There were actually three Camp "B"s— the first one, at Corrigan Creek, opened in 1936. As logging continued deeper into the 'claim', the second Camp "B" was built at Parsons Creek in 1939. The camp buildings were simply skidded onto log cars and moved up the line to the new location! The third Camp "B", which became the headquarters of all of the Franklin River operations, was moved to Coleman Creek in 1946. After that, there were no more moves. It just grew and evolved, began to shrink and finally, simply disappeared back into the forest.

It was an industrial camp with one purpose—to provide logs for the big "BS&W" "Somass Mill" in Port Alberni. Everything moved by rail, starting with the logs, which were sent to the 'beach' at Camp "A". The loggers went to work in 'speeders'; logging equipment, including the big skidders, moved from setting to setting by rail; supplies and groceries came to camp by rail; the very camp buildings were moved by rail. Railroad tracks were laid in camp between the rows of bunk-houses, married quarters and camp buildings to facilitate their movement.

Boardwalks

Old-timers remember the boardwalks at the "new Camp B". Boardwalks were the 'streets' of the community. The camp was carved out of the valley bottom, after it had been logged off. It was a raw, muddy wasteland. Don Watt remembers that at first, there were only narrow paths. "When you met someone, you both turned sideways and held on to each other to pass. In winter, if you stepped off, you ended up to your knees in the mud."

Boardwalks soon criss-crossed the site. They were laid between the tracks that ran between the rows of houses of the 'married quarters' and one ran over to the schoolhouse. They also lay between all of the bunkhouses and the cookhouse, the wash-house and the outhouse. They were built from lumber sent from the "BS&W" sawmill 'in town'.

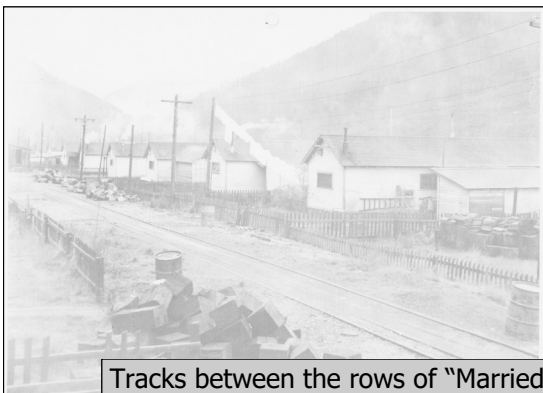
For the children, the boardwalks were a principal playground as you were out of the omnipresent mud. You learned to ride bikes there. You could ride for an hour, just following the boardwalks. Parades for the children took place on the boardwalks with decorated bikes, tricycles and animals.

Bicycles were one of the most popular things for a Franklin River kid to own. The first big purchase that Don made as a child was a new bicycle. He and his buddies collected beer bottles from the bunkhouses and shipped them to Victoria via the "Princess Maquinna". They got so many bottles—more than 300 dozen—that they got 5c a bottle instead of the normal 3c. With his share, Don bought his first bike. He remembered that the power saw mechanics were a popular friend to many children. They would take their bikes to the Power saw Shop to repair flat tires, broken pedals and spokes.

[cont'd. p. 7]



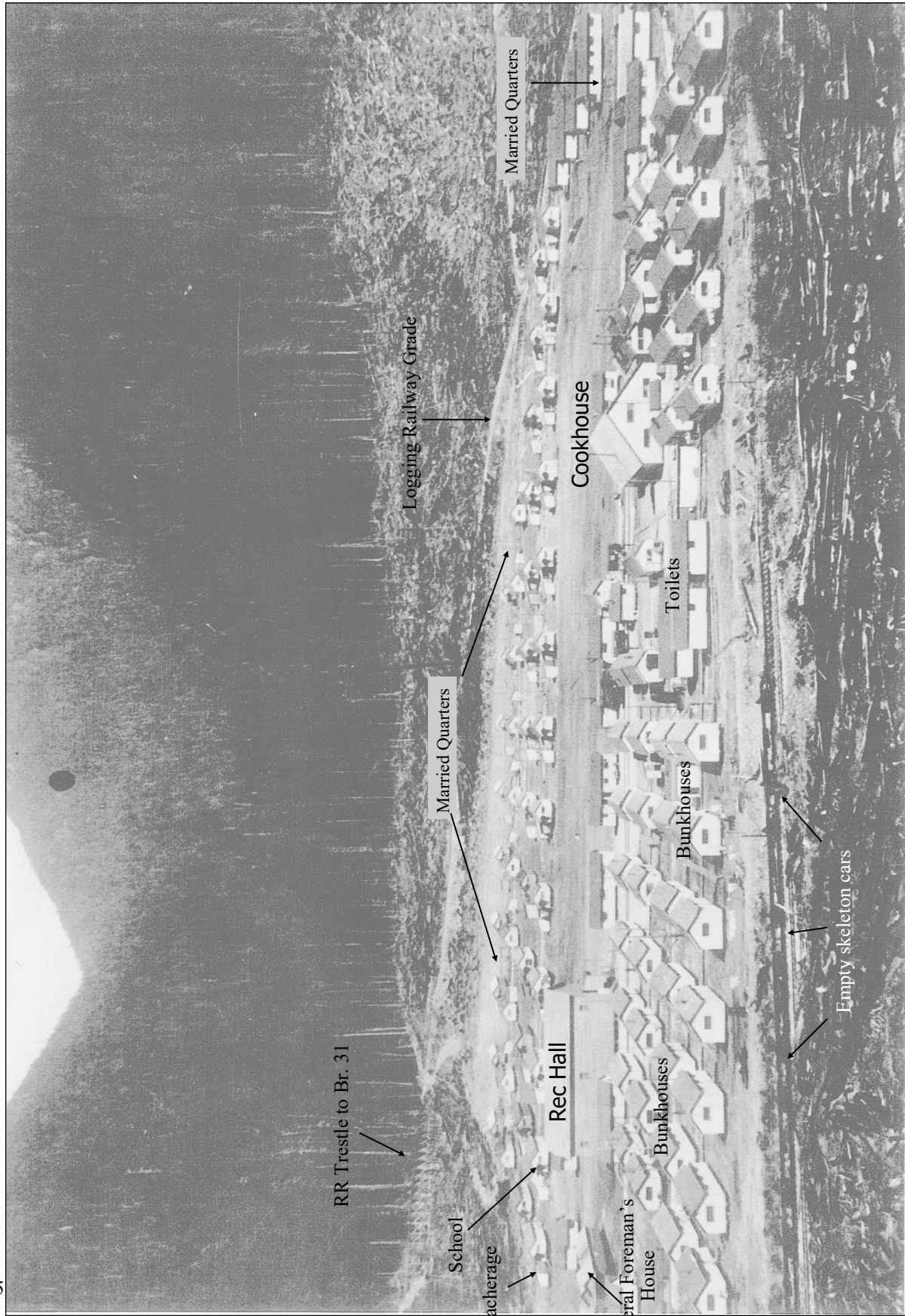
PARADE on the Boardwalk
Children using the boardwalk for a parade of decorated bikes and trikes.



4

Tracks between the rows of "Married Quarters" houses. Planks were laid between the rails to make a boardwalk. Note the firewood, which the Company brought by railcar to each house, which had a woodshed behind to keep it dry.

Bloedel, Stewart & Welch
Franklin River Logging Camp B 1947

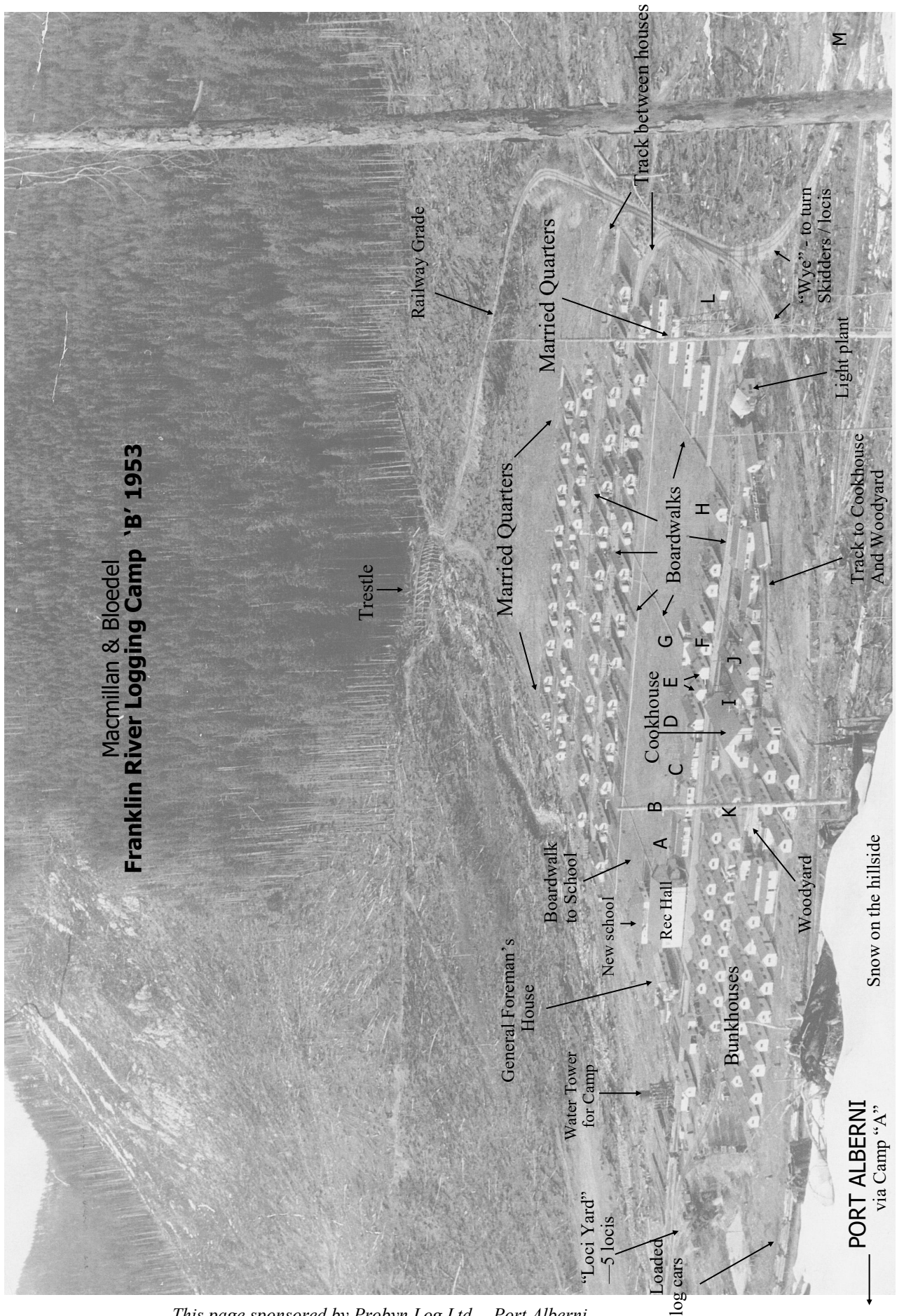


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— To Camp "A" 14 miles
— Boat to Port Alberni

To Nitinat River 13 miles —>

Macmillan & Bloedel
Franklin River Logging Camp 'B' 1953



This page sponsored by Probyn Log Ltd.—Port Alberni

KEY to 1953 Photo (facing page)

A	First Aid Shack	G	Coffee shop
B	Engineers' Office	H	Fire Hall
C	Main Office	I	Kitchen Supplies & Food storage
D	Commissary & Post Office	J	Kitchen staff
E	Female 'flunkys' Bunkhouses	K	Boiler House
F	Guest houses	L	Fire Hose Tower
		M	Fuel tank car



One-room Schoolhouse

School children playing (bikes) on the boardwalk in front of the 'old' one-room school.

Getting into Trouble?

Don recounted stories of how the children made their own fun in those days before Rec Commissions. The older kids sometimes got into trouble in their search for excitement in an industrial camp.

One hot summer day, some boys had a debate about whether gasoline would burn on water. So, they borrowed a can of gas from the Power saw Shack. They dumped it into the creek that ran by the "Locs Yard" and tossed in a match. A blazing stream was soon heading towards the "Locs Yard" and the crews ran over to toss rocks into the creek to try to put out the fire. The kids 'evaporated' and knew nothing about it.

With the constant extension of rail line and spurs into new settings, a lot of dynamite ("powder") was used at Franklin River for grade construction, as well as for other uses. Loggers often carried a stick or two and would use it to split a particularly large cedar or to blow a 'choker hole' under a big log. There was a "powder shack" but security was not heavy.

One day, the boys found a box of dynamite and decided that this was an opportunity to experiment. They were caught heading towards the trestle to Branch 31, outside the Camp.

Children always like a swing so, the Fire Hose Tower was a popular place to visit. There was a big ring on a long rope. Wet hoses were hung over the ring, then raised up for drying. The kids would hang on the ring and swing back and forth. Great fun, until someone inevitably fell off or was banged into the legs of the tower.

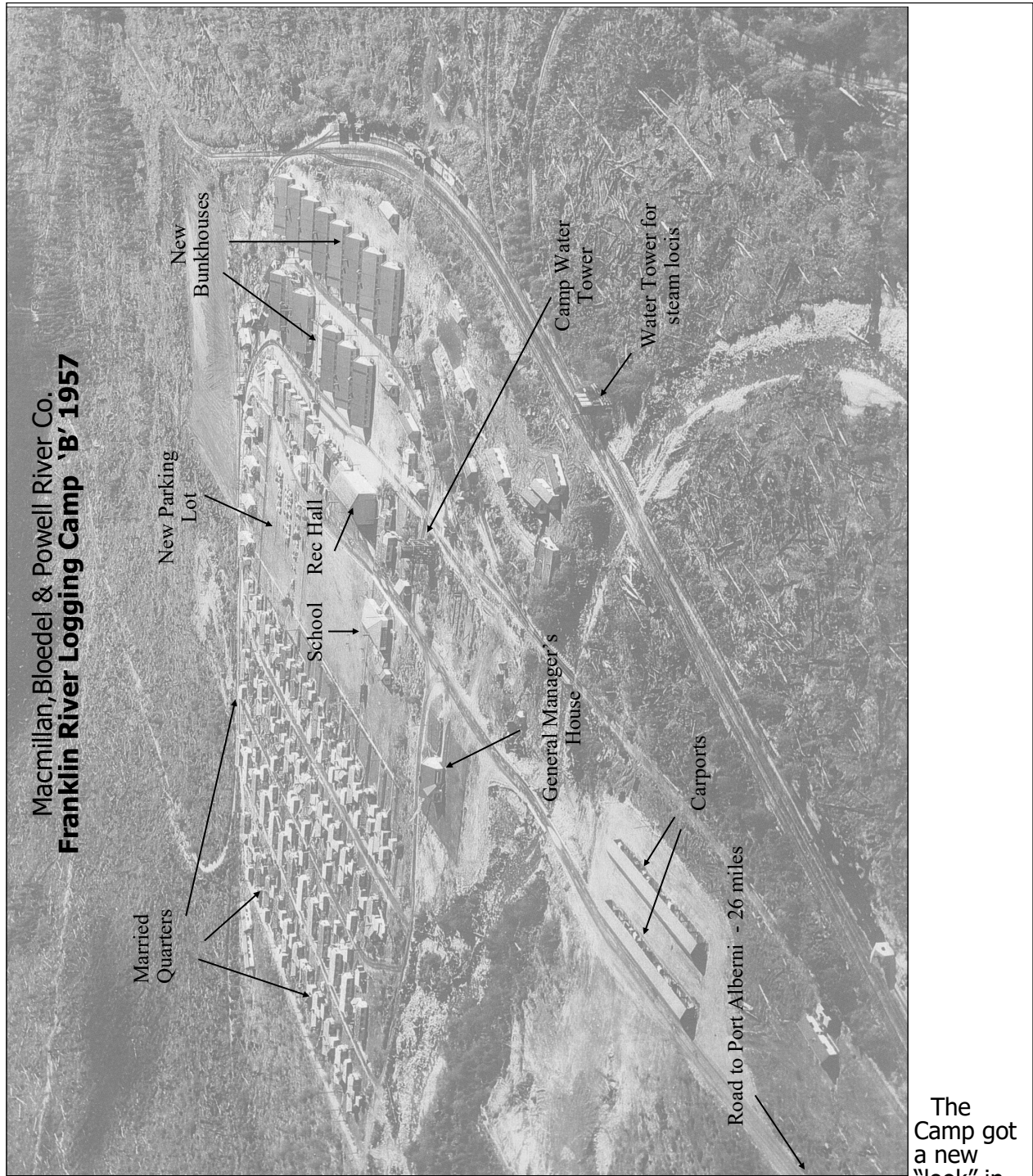
Children like to climb so, as well as the Hose Tower, there was the Water Tower at the other end of the Camp, beyond the Rec Hall. This game would get interrupted by Jack Bell, who lived nearby. He would yell at them to get down, with his 'bull of the woods' voice.

Bell started work at Franklin River when the operation began in 1934 and rose to the job of General Foreman, a post he held for many years. He ate with the men in the Cookhouse, declaring that "If the food was good enough for him, it was good enough for the men."

Access

In the beginning, Camp "B" was only accessible from the "Outside" by boat to Camp "A"—the original camp at the mouth of the Franklin River, on the Alberni Inlet. People, their belongings, groceries and supplies for the Camp all had to be transported another 14 miles (22 km.) from Camp "A" by speeder. Some came on the weekly steamship, the "S.S. Princess Maquinna", from Victoria; others came via Port Alberni. In the 1940's, women wishing to go shopping in Port Alberni had to catch the Saturday morning speeder to Camp "A", to catch the 'Stone Bros.' boat to town. Then, they had to do it all in reverse to get back home to Camp... but laden with purchases this time. It was an all-day effort. In the winter, this was sometimes quite an ordeal, especially in snowy weather when the speeder might go off the rails. Winter rains could make it an unpleasant journey and you did NOT want to miss the boat!

In 1954, the road to Port Alberni was opened, ending the Camp's isolation and its dependence on the railroad. The railway camps at Great Central Lake (BS&W) and at "Camp One" (APL) had already shut down so, the closure of the rail operations at Franklin in 1957 marked the end of that era in the Alberni region. A Main Line haul road to Coleman Creek Dump (shorter) replaced the rail line to the "beach" at Camp "A". Carports were built for the Bunkhouse crews while garages were built in the Married Quarters. The Car had come to Camp!



**Macmillan, Bloedel & Powell River Co.
Franklin River Logging Camp 'B' 1957**

The Camp got a new "look" in

the '50's, soon after the amalgamation of H.R. Macmillan with its rival, "Bloedel, Stewart & Welch". New Bunkhouses were built. The old 8-man units, designed to be moved on a rail car, were demolished. Two men to a room, bathrooms, central heating, Change and Drying rooms in every Bunkhouse—the Camp 'went modern'. The company journal, "Harmac News" noted that the new bunkhouse "...easily rivals a modern hotel in appearance and comfort." There were 58 houses in the 'Married Quarters' in 1956. Older children were bussed to Port Alberni for High School and no longer had to 'board out'. With the conversion of the Camp to "truck logging", parking lots were needed for the new trucks, "crummies" and other wheeled equipment.

RESTORATION of 1917 "FARQUHAR" STEAM TRACTOR

A 1917 "Farquhar" steam tractor, once used to provide power to the planer at the R.B. McLean Lumber Co. steam sawmill, has been under restoration this winter in the Industrial Heritage Centre. Les Stevens, helped by other I.H.S. members, is leading the project.

Years of grime and rust were first power-washed off, courtesy of "Walco Industries". The boiler had to be re-tubed and made 'tight'. Boilermakers from "Lodge 359" volunteered their time. Rocky Roxburgh, retired Boilermaker, looked after Quality Control. They completed the job to the satisfaction of the Provincial Boiler Inspector on January 25. Kamtech Services and Robinson Rentals (Nanaimo) loaned the tools. Keith Young—steam Engineer at the McLean Mill— has lent his expertise, as well as Ken Fyfe of 'Fyfe Well-Drilling'.

Jim Isnor (Kodiak) did the "non-destructive testing"



Boiler tubes, awaiting installation. Newly-fabricated Operator's deck & water tank visible. (below) **Boilermakers rolling tubes** Brent Pennington (l.) & Barry Dobrensky. Bill Rogers and Leon McCrea also worked on it.

of the boiler while Jamie Cates ('Acuren Testing') measured boiler plate thickness.

An Operator's deck and water tank was fabricated at the back of the machine after Alberni Engineering bent and rolled the steel plate. The two-cylinder steam engine has been restored as well by Russ McCoy and Les.



(below) **Keith Young & Les Stevens** compare notes in front of tractor frame.



Boiler after hydrostatic test.



MEMBERS at WORK



WELCOME ASSISTANCE!
 (l.) Liz Barber was 'down South' for a classroom session of her apprenticeship in Dawson Creek. She spent several days at the I.H.C., re-wiring the instrument panel of the 1965 "City" GMC. Thanks, Liz!!



(r.) **The Workbench**
 Bert Simpson (back) and Jan Jansma at work.



(below) John Land, 'Santa Train' Engineer.



(above right) Jonathan Peck and Rollie Hurst on "RS-3" .

(r.) Vic Laughlin fixes air valve for the "No. 11"



(below) **The Next Project**
 -Pre CPR-era "E &N" Caboose Crew prepares to replace rotten ties. (from left: Rod Clark, Bert Simpson, David Taberner.



Santa Train
 (above) Jake Heid dries off coach seats

(l.) **Break**
 G. Blake, Lindsay Rogers and Linda Hunter.



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