

"THE MIRACLE OF THE NORTH. How an Uninhabited Settlement Grew into a Flourishing Town of Industry in One year."

By

G.S.D.

The Christmas Record (1917), pp. 15-16.

Truly the age of miracles has not passed as is evidenced by the marvelous developments, which have occurred in the short space of one year at that erstwhile unknown settlement now named PORT UNION. Miraculous is the only word that can fittingly describe the great undertaking that has been accomplished there. When we hear of Port Union, here in St. John's, we are inclined to think that it's more or less an exaggerated place, but the visitor there sees the greatest example of what capital and labor can do under skilful guidance. To describe in detail the great immense plant, would take lengthy space, but a short description of the settlement in general will certainly be of interest to Newfoundlanders both at home and abroad, who desire to see their country progressing and such monuments of enterprise being erected.

The most important spectacle that meets the visitor's eye in Port Union is the immense fish stores, measuring 135 feet frontage by 100 feet rearage, with three electric elevator shafts. These stores have storage room for more fish than any two similar premises in St. John's. The top flats will be divided into departments for cooperages and sailmaking rooms.

The mammoth shops and show rooms of the premises at Port Union out-rival in general accommodation anything in this City, and the department that has been selected for wholesale work could not be improved upon either in point of its general lay out or capacity for stocks.

The workingmen's dwelling houses are certainly model residences and good enough for any family. Every modern convenience has been introduced, and the appearance of these neat-looking rows of dwellings makes the little settlement take on a city aspect and in the words of one of the visitors, "Port Union will out-rival St. John's in the coming years."

Another handsome building is the fine Hotel which has been erected to accommodate the many visitors who from time to time will visit this enterprising centre, as everyone who goes North now wants to stop over and see the New Town.

The handsome bungalow that has been built for the manager of the premises also adds considerably to the general appearance of the place and the whole premises gives the impression that this is no merely commercial undertaking, but rather a modern, up-to-date town, where the social welfare of its inhabitants as well as the means of their support has not been overlooked.

The shipbuilding plant needs no comment as everyone knows about the splendid vessel that has recently come off the stocks and judging from the general activity to be noticed around this quarter, many other fine ships are to be built there in the near future. It is not surprising that this vast enterprise has been referred to as the Miracle of the North, when we take into consideration the difficulties which the promoters had to contend with in getting the foundations laid and the vast constructions in working order. To take an uninhabited settlement, consisting practically of nothing but uncultivated land, and in the short space of one year, convert it into a small town, with its own electric light plant, its enormous stores and offices; its shipbuilding plant and branch railway, together with numbers of model dwelling houses, is truly miraculous work and a great "boost" for the Northern part of our Country.

That the people appreciate this big undertaking was clearly shown by the enthusiasm which they displayed at the recent Convention held in the new premises. A visit to Port Union will well repay any visitor, and, doubtless, the coming Summer will see many tourists flock to this mushroom City of the North.

The whole undertaking is a grand tribute to the work of the Fishermen's Union, and such a big enterprise deserves all the success which it will undoubtedly enjoy in future years.

Another matter in connection with the premises, which should make all Newfoundlanders feel proud is the fact that local skill and labor is all that has been called upon to perform the different works, and the result is a fitting tribute to our local talent and skill. Particular mention should be made of the work of Mr. B.J. Miller, who drew up the plans of the whole plant and personally superintended the construction. Not only did Mr. Miller accomplish the work in remarkably quick time, having had to contend with many difficulties and obstacles, but the great talent and initiative of the man won out, and if a monument to a skilful Newfoundlander were to be erected no greater one than the Works at Port Union could be thought of. Mr. Miller is a native of Trinity Bay, and this centre has produced many talented men, but none more so than the Architect and Superintendent of the Port Union Works.