



Grand Falls



BEING called upon to write an article for our local gazette is hardly my line of work but it seems I am supposed to qualify. Our Assistant-Assistant Editor conjured that after learning of my recent visits to our nearest metropolis, Grand Falls.

The information contained in the following is meant only for newcomers to our fair station.

Seeing that our education in Canadian schools has been sadly neglected, where Newfoundland is concerned, I will give you a very brief review before going further.

The climate, as most of us are led to believe, is not one of fog and cold. Rather it is a bracing one or what is known as a cool temperate climate. Another common mistake is to think that the only industry is fishing, although cod fishing is the main one. Pulp and paper manufacturing, also mining are major industries. One of the largest pulp and paper mills in the world is located right at Grand Falls. Another point of interest to any of you who have attempted to hike in the woods, is the fact that nearly one third of the island is covered with water or swamp-land. (I wonder if that explains our Gander mud?).

No doubt there are a few "first" impressions of Newfoundland which need correcting. Gander is definitely not an example of what the whole island is like. Have you ever tried to find a few blades of grass around the station?—(passing up the "green pastures" around the "admin" building of course). In contrast notice the scenery along the railway on your next trip out. Some of the villages along the way, remind you of the summer resorts by the river back home.

But I'm afraid I'm wandering, let's go to Grand Falls. There is not much left to be said about the modes of transportation as most of you arrived on the Overland Limited—the one and only. It leaves here Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays in the wee sma' hours o' the morn. Around seven a.m. after a sleepless night's travel, the conductor parades through shouting "Windsor next stop." Of course you don't hear what he said but you are ready to get off regardless of where you are. But this is your destination, the train does not go through Grand Falls. The final mile is traversed by taxi. *Note*—it's a fifteen minute walk just in case you are financially embarrassed on the return trip.

The taxi will deliver you to the door of anyone of the three hotels, or the hostel. For those who wish to live in luxury, three room suites may be obtained at a reasonable price. The familiar "double room please" is often heard, singles may also be had. Boarding house style is quite popular, with the usual row as to who is going to shave first. Not wishing to break away from your daily routine you will find a comfortable bunk at the "Sally Ann." Two of the hotels are located downtown, with the other hotel and the hostel a short walk from there.

The pulp and paper mill is the only industry in the town. It is owned by the Anglo-Newfoundland Development Co., with headquarters in Great Britain. As a result the town itself is controlled by the company and many of its customs tend to be along English rather than American lines.

One of the first things you notice are the wickerwork lunch baskets, carried by the men working in the mill. You never see a lunch kit. It reminds me of the Sunday afternoon picnics in the woods back home. The streets seem to be the proper place to walk in Grand Falls, at least that is where you find the majority of the pedestrians. I always meant to find out what the sidewalks were for. Of course no one is going to grumble about the blackout, though those streets are too dark to walk down alone at night—(but why walk alone).

A surprise to the majority of us was the number of new cars seen around town. In fact you never see any old square covered models. Of course you'll also notice that the left side of the road is popular with the motorists. With the steering wheel on the left you find it doubly hard driving. If you should decide to go cycling don't forget that English wheels have no coaster brake. Hitch hiking is not a common practice in Newfoundland as we found out. Several cars had gone by when we noticed that all the drivers were glancing at us then staring up the road to see what we were pointing at.

Regardless of all these customs which we find amusing, I can truthfully say that I have never felt so much at home, away from home, as I have on my visits there. You will never find people more friendly and hospitable. A good many of the boys now stay at private homes which they would not exchange for anything.

If by chance, you were lucky enough to get your pass for a week end, you will find plenty to do. There is always a dance at the K. of C. of Friday nights. These usually last until one thirty or two and are well attended. The atmosphere is very friendly so you will have no trouble getting acquainted. As it has been a long time (much too long) since I've set foot in a dance hall in our native land, I cannot remember there being any difference to the ones here. Of course you realize that its not like spending an evening at the Normandie Roof in Montreal. Personally I prefer the Saturday night dances which quit at twelve o'clock; these are held upstairs in the Parish Hall. All dances are scheduled to start at nine thirty so they are usually in full swing shortly after ten. Although Grand Falls is what is known as a "dry" town you see numerous beaming countenances at the dance hall. Sorry fellows, I can't explain further.

Seeing that passes only come once a month you find it rather hard to get to bed at night. Getting up at noon therefore does not leave you much time for sightseeing. If you are ambitious a very interesting morning can be spent touring the paper mill. Permission must first be obtained from one of the mill supervisors.

Swimming is very popular during the very short summer. Besides the river, there is an outdoor pool. The river is probably the best; when the logs are not coming down. For those of you who prefer golf, there is a marvellous golf course a short way from town. The tennis courts are always in use and it is no trouble to get a few games of mixed doubles. Badminton is a favorite winter sport along with basket-ball. The feminine sex really hold up their end of the sport parade. You see them all the way from the basket-ball gym to the swimming pool. (Is that why you see so many fellows sitting on the rocks down by the river, or waiting anxiously around in a pair of swimming trunks?)

I could go on to describe all the million and one other pleasures such as having a huge steak and French dried or that, oh so rare, glass of ice cold milk, perhaps even a sundae. But as that would prove more boring than the preceding notes I suggest that you spend your next pass in Grand Falls to find out for yourself.

Bishop's Falls, situated on the same river, is a nine mile drive from Grand Falls. It is somewhat smaller in size but is well worth seeing. Perhaps you may meet the same people who made your stay there so enjoyable. Dances are usually held on Wednesday nights. The falls here are also worth seeing. And for the enthusiastic fisherman this is a perfect spot for reeling in the salmon (but don't forget that fishing license).

There is something definitely wrong with you if a week-end pass spent in Grand Falls and vicinity is not a very enjoyable one. Entertainment can be found regardless of your likes and dislikes.

—N. W. B.
