

Report of James Cooper, Harbour Master of Esquimalt, on a cruise of HMS Alert  
Comr Pearse

Sepr 3rd left Fort "Simpson" under steam for the north end of Queen Charlotte Island, in the evening anchored at the mouth of "Virago" Sound, and on the following morning, steamed inside.

The Chief Conday having just arrived from Sitka reported the arrival of an English Ship at that port,- but we subsequently found that the ship alluded to was one of the R.A.Cos from the "Asiatic" Coast-, The day after our arrival in the sound explained to the chiefs & Indians a few of the most desirable points which was considered compatible with their knowledge of comprehension and they like all the others expressed a willingness to fall into our views.

"Virago" Sound is a spacious and splendid harbour,....and judging from the vegetables - Turnips, Onions, & Potatoes, of an average size and good quality produced by these Indians, must be much better in climate and in quality of soil than it is believed to be.

July 31  
Sepr 8th Left Virago Sound, fine beautiful wr, anchored in Parry Passage at 9 a.m. fired a gun for the natives to come off, none making their appearance, Comr Pearse and myself went on shore to the village, which is a very large one, but on our landing it bore a melancholly and desolate appearance, as not a soul was to be seen, the houses covd. inside and out with rank vegetation, bearing the resemblance of having been deserted some time: the chief "Edensaw" we met at Nanaimo on our way north who is at this time probably at "Victoria" with the whole of his tribe. This circumstance is suggestive of great difficulties in case of any trouble arising at "Victoria", and it should be deemed necessary to compel their departure for their own homes, inasmuch that they would not have provided a winter stock of provisions, which resources is necessary as well as customary, particularly as dried fish is their staple article of food.

(Speaks also of more frequent interchanges between Queen Charlotte and Sitka Indians and latter learning of attractions of Victoria. Sitka wa close to QCI)