

(COPY)

To Urban Dall

MB

Alert Bay, B.C.
July 24th, 1958.

Dear Mr. Barbeau:

When I returned the other day from a painting trip to Kitwanga and vicinity, your letter was awaiting me.

My husband tells me that the winter potlatches are not now held, as such, in the villages or camping sites. The Secret Societies have largely died out with the passing of the patriarchs. The last ten years have seen a great change.

The men you mentioned, Charlie Newman and Peter Pescaro died before we came to Alert Bay in March 1953. Mrs. Stephen Cook had also passed away the year before we came here. Charles Knowles died last year, and Stephen Cook, some months earlier. Dan Cranmer is in the hospital with a very bad heart condition. There is an oxygen tent beside his bed to be used when his attacks come on. He was grieved not to be able to take part in the Ceremonial Dances which were put on here in honour of the B.C. Centenary.

The Ceremonial Dances have been performed in the Community Hall here, once a year since we have been here. The proceeds are given to the local hospital. This year the Dances were much more effective since they were performed at night out-of-doors by the light of a huge bonfire, on June 21st. The writer you mentioned would have seen the best of the Kwakwaka'wakw dancing if she had been here at that time. All the tribes from the surrounding area were present and regalia and masks not seen for many years were used in the dances. There were two people from CBUT Vancouver taking moving pictures for T.V. so you may have seen them.

Mungo Martin, as you no doubt know, is at present living in Victoria where he is carving and painting totem poles for the Park. He recently completed the "largest Totem in the world" and personally took it over to England, where it was erected in Windsor Park. I saw the pole in a newsreel; it was most impressive. All this is, of course, known to you.

It is unfortunate that the study of potlatches, Secret Societies, etc. were not completed years ago, since now so many of the men who knew about them and participated in them are dead. I believe that the mixture of white blood with the Indian has had more to do with the cessation of the Secret Societies than the law passed against them. Do you not agree with me?

I know that you made an extensive study of these Societies and you probably have the most information on them of anyone.

If there is anything further that we can tell you, please write again.

Yours very sincerely,

(sgd) Jean Findlay.

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R. John