

James Halbold Christie Lest We Forget

BY GRACE WORTH

My husband and I settled in Trinity Valley, in the mountains north-east of Vernon, B.C. on June 29th, 1901. I remember that the rain poured down on that day and for six weeks thereafter we got no more, and it was a very hot summer. Being accustomed to the English climate, the extreme heat and the mosquitoes gave me a miserable time.

After becoming acclimatized, I became interested in the names of the physical features of our Valley. I had heard different versions of the names, but most old-timers agreed that they had been given by Jim Christie who discovered the Valley. Different people had given me different explanations.

Mrs. Deschamps of Lumby, B.C. told me that when the road was being first put in, several French Canadian men worked **on it**, and it seemed to take such a long time to reach the end of the surveyors' layout, they named it Eternity Valley. But of course it had been named before the road began.

Although Mr. Christie and I were contemporary inhabitants of the Okanagan for over forty years, I did not meet or correspond with him until he was an old man. He told me that he entered Trinity Valley by following up a creek from the south end of Mabel Lake. He stood on a high mound of land somewhere near the place that afterwards became the home of the Saunders family.

From there he could see three mountain ranges, and as the discoverers were a man, his dog and his pony, he decided to name it Trinity Valley. Being the son of a clergyman, he apparently knew something about Hell, for the creek that ran into Mabel Lake he called the Styx, "... as I had a hell of a time making my way up". Being a true Scot, the mountain on his left he called Bobbie Burns; further west he found several lakes which were called Christie Lakes.

Lossie Creek ran by our house, and many people thought it was called Lossie because part of its course went underground in summer. Others thought it was called after his dog Lassie, but Mr. Christie said, "I called it after the River Lossie in Scotland. We lived on one side of the Lossie, and Ramsay MacDonald's family lived on the other side in one of the cottages on the Christie estate". Ramsay MacDonald having been born in 1866 must have been a very small boy when Jim Christie, who was related to the Christie Biscuit people, left Scotland for Canada in 1871.

In answering my letter about place names, he did not give me the information I asked for, but his letter reveals that he was far from satisfied with his personal circumstances in his old age, and anxious to bring about socialism in Canada. He says, "Dear Friend: I received your letter of enquiry months ago. I should have been delighted at the time to reply, but under living conditions with me here at the Refuge, I have found it impossible to carry on correspondence. For several weeks I was really under a cloud, you may call it flu, general weakness, or town contamination, or what you may wish to call it, in fact severe colds, one on top of the other, but this last ten days practically crawling from under the effects. With the exception of my eyes which trouble me somewhat, I am really getting into shape again.

"I am engaged at present with going to war against the town and war really on account of the manner of abuse which I have suffered this last winter. There is one old veteran in the country who will give them a run for their money on present conditions imposed.

I will appreciate it very much should you be in town, if you would drop in and see me. There is much to be talked over and absolutely necessary to do something towards giving the common people in line with the C.C.F. that would carry the people forward to a new fighting front for a new Earth. Whilst arranging for the new Earth, we may as well incorporate a portion of a new heaven that can be enjoyed here quite oblivious to the time when we are expected to sprout wings.

"There is no use fighting locally for changed conditions until we have some means in the way of a publication to maintain the public's interest in any movement for the betterment of the race. And I am personally determined to become a local Isaiah or a John



JIM CHRISTIE and DOG PAT

the Baptist. Get out on the high-ways and by-ways and trust to the ravens and crows to provide me a modicum of sustenance. I would dearly like to put in a night with the people of Trinity, could I overcome the lack of transport. Until I have the pleasure of meeting you somewhere, wishing you all luck and good wishes. Respectfully, J. H. Christie".

Jim Christie is worthy of more than Canada ever gave him. The best years of his life were given to weaving the warp and woof of that canvas which illustrates our territory, and of helping to mix the "cement" which joined together the country we know as Canada.

The first time I visited him at "The Refuge" he asked me if I would write of his life in Canada. I promised to do so and in honor of his memory I will try to tell his story as he told it to me, enhanced by other reliable sources.

He promised to prepare material for me which would help me do the job, and he kept his promise. But the authorities who should have reserved such material were either simple-minded and lacking in their sense of value of historical facts for a growing country, or they were afraid of the revelations contained therein, for it was destroyed.

At the time of Mr. Christie's death, Mr. C. W. Morrow (now Judge Morrow) was the Official Administrator. I wrote Judge Morrow to ask if it was possible for me to obtain any of this material, and the significant part of his answer was "I have had no luck with my search re the estate of Jim Christie; there have been two changes in the Office of the Official Administrator, and such things as scrap books, etc., seem to have been destroyed long since. Jim had a particularly interesting set of old clippings, which I went through very carefully, and they told a tremendously interesting story of the early days here, and would have been of supreme value to you in your endeavours."

This destruction has given me a lot of work in the way of research and taken much of my time, which is getting short. But perhaps this loss is for the best, as in the course of searching I have been made aware of the fact, that unlike the Okanagan, the State of Washington, and indeed the North West States of the American Continent treasure the memory of Jim Christie. Mount Christie in Washington is named after him, and much has been written of his achievements, some of which I shall include later.

Although I had corresponded with Mr. Christie for some time, I did not meet him until 1937. He must have been about 85 years of age at that time. He was in what appeared to be an empty store on Barnard Avenue in Vernon. There was a provincial election on and



This is MOUNT CHRISTIE, Washington State, which honours the name of our Canadian explorer. Our thanks for this picture goes to Washington State Historical Society.

the window was plastered with cuttings from newspapers; they were mostly articles criticizing the government. It could have been a party committee room.

As he had asked me to call when in town, I went into the store. It was a very hot afternoon and as there was no one in the front, I timidly approached the opening into the back room. There was a bed, and a rug on the floor by the side of the bed. An old Indian lady lay asleep on the bed, and Mr. Christie lay asleep on the rug. As I was in a hurry to return to our farm 32 miles away, of necessity I awakened him. He apologized for being asleep, and introduced me to his friend, saying that she was very tired after having walked from the reservation. ". . . so I gave her my bed to rest on, and took my nap on the rug."

From old-timers of the neighborhood I have learned that in previous years Mr. Christie had had an Indian common-law wife. Mr. Cecil Johnson of Vernon tells me that he knew both Jim Christie and his wife. He remembers visiting them when they lived in a two-roomed cabin above the irrigation ditch in the B.X. District. Mr. Johnson said, "She was an attractive woman, a good housekeeper, most hospitable, and her home was exceptionally clean. Although at that time, their financial circumstances were meagre, they disdained charity, and would accept nothing for which they could not pay."

They had a son whom they named Lloyd Christie. His wife had died in the Vernon Hospital before I met him, and since Mr. Christie died the son was accidentally drowned in the Kamloops district. I asked one local lady who knew him when she was a girl, if she could tell me anything about him. She said, "Ugh! He had an Indian woman." I reminded her that in the days when he came to Canada, and in the circumstances in which he lived, he had little choice. I also reminded her that Donald Smith who was born a few miles from Christie's birthplace had an Indian woman whom he married, and later she became Lady Strathcona. If the Brotherhood of Man is the goal of Christianity, these two were about a hundred years ahead of the majority of us.

SQUAWMAN

*Yet ever in the far forlorn, by trails of lone desire;
Yet ever in the dawn's white leer of hate;
Yet ever by the dripping kill, beside the drowsy fire,
There comes the fierce heart-hunger for a mate.
The man must have the woman, and we're all brutes
more or less,*

*Since first the male-ape shinned the family tree,
And yet I think I love her with a husband's tenderness,
And yet I know that she would die for me."*

—Robert Service

Both Donald Smith and Jim Christie were born in Moray, Scotland. Smith was born of poor parents, and Christie's parents were well-to-do by comparison. As at that time there were no schools for the poor as we know schools today, Smith could not have got much education as a youth, but Christie's father was able to send him to school near Edinburgh, which in those days of extreme social snobbery, in all probability would have been open to the upper class only.

The Hudson's Bay Company brought Smith to Canada to work for them. He worked so diligently in the interests of his masters, that he rose to be Hudson's Bay factor. He eventually became a millionaire, and was awarded the title of Lord Strathcona by the "Great White Mother" Queen Victoria.

Both men had a great deal to do with Indians. Smith made his fortune through trading with the Indians, and Christie spent most of his life trying to obtain a better deal for them.

When I visited Mr. Christie early in 1942 he was living in the back of an old abandoned packing shed, by the railway, at the corner of what is now 32nd Street and 43rd Avenue. He called it the Refuge. It was not a fit habitation for a human being. He was there by permission of the owner, Mr. George Heggie who had been a Conservative M.L.A. for the North Okanagan.

He must have lived in this ramshackle place for a long time, as I recently interviewed some people who were neighbors of his. Mrs. K. told me that by his request she had made him a Russian flag, which he erected outside his shack alongside the Canadian flag, so that soldiers marching by would have to salute both flags. This gave him great pleasure. One night someone took away the Russian flag, so she made him another, which he took into his shack at night and put up again each morning.

At the time I called he was ill in bed and very depressed, saying "I miss Mrs. Helen Slack, my interpreter, very much. She died in February at the age of 85 and is buried at the Head of the Lake." This could have been the old lady he introduced me to in 1937.

He complained that the old age pension he received was not enough to live on, and said, "I have been nearer the pearly gates than ever before in my life, and if it had not been for the kindness of a German woman who lives across the street, who is not a nationalized

citizen, I would have died." This German lady brought him a hot lunch every day. He was also concerned about the doctor who had called. His dog Pat, thinking his master needed protection, had bitten the doctor. I heard nothing more of it so I presume it was not serious.

Perhaps his illness forewarned him that he had not much longer to live, for it was during this visit that he asked me if I would write something about his life. This I promised him and before I left took some rather hasty notes. He said he had much material that would be useful to me and that he would assemble it in preparation for my next visit. This material, as previously stated, was destroyed.

When I returned the shack was empty and making enquiries from his German friend across the way I could get little information. She was not very conversant with the English language, but she made me understand that the people who took Mr. Christie's things away, refused to return her white bed-linen which she had lent him. Such dishonesty is a poor reward to a Good Samaritan.

This is the story of a part of his life which I got directly from him: "I was born at Speyside in Scotland. The River Lossie was ten miles away. Ramsay MacDonald (who later became the first Socialist Prime Minister of Great Britain), lived in a cottage on the Christie estate. I was sent to school near Edinburgh. I came to Canada in the spring of 1871 on the *Corinthian* when she was new, and the captain was a relative of mine. I landed in Quebec at the age of nineteen. I joined the Canadian Artillery, B Battery, in Quebec in the spring of 1872. In the fall I was put in charge of a gun crew travelling from Quebec to Manitoba. We went by rail to Sarnia, and after that there were no roads or railways. I brought the gun crew over the old Shuebandian Route, and through the rivers by boat. The boat was built of wood and called the *Maid of the Mist*. We built roads through the forest, and travelled through a series of lakes, one by the name of *Isle of Cross*. Through these lakes to the north west angle of *Lake of the Woods*, and we marched from there to *Fort Garry* which is now *Winnipeg*.

"I left the military in 1876 and joined the Mounted Police for special service. This at the request of Colonel James Walker, late of Calgary. I carried dispatches to Swan River to the police headquarters. I went to Swan River Barracks and found the Government was relieving Colonel French of command and putting in Commissioner McLeod. I was sent from Swan Lake, Manitoba, to Battleford, Northwest Territories, and I left instructions there with Inspector Frechette who had just arrived, and was opening up Battleford for a

police post. I went to Fort Carleton, a Hudson's Bay fort, with instructions regarding the first Indian Treaty at Fort Pitt. I returned to wait for instructions at Battleford. I remained at Battleford until the arrival of North West Police troops from Fort Pitt, when we were ordered immediately to Fort Walsh, as Sitting Bull had arrived after the Battle of the Big Horn in Montana. In the Custer Massacre, Indians had destroyed the Seventh Cavalry under Custer's command, 700 strong; only two men got away. The Indians then moved to Woody Mountain and I joined with the police at Fort Walsh and moved down to meet them there. I travelled entirely alone from Calgary to north of the Mackenzie River. At the last Riel Rebellion I was made foreman of the Military Colonization Ranch between Blackfoot Indian Reserves and Calgary."

Commenting on the last paragraph, C. B. Stacey of the Defence Department has this to say: "Major General Strange, owner of the Colonization Ranch, commanded one of the military columns participating in the campaign against the rebel Riel. Mr. Christie who was his foreman, no doubt took charge of the ranch during its owner's absence." He also quotes General Strange, who in his book says of Christie, "I had secured as foreman an ex-Canadian gunner, subsequently in the NWMP; when his term of service had expired he had lived with the Indians. An adventurous fellow was Jim Christie, a well-educated Scotsman, a good shot and horse-breaker, and a kind-hearted cheerful chap, who had no enemy but himself."



"THE REFUGE"

This is a picture of "The Refuge," Vernon, B.C., taken by the author, a few weeks before our adventurist humanitarian passed on.

Mr. W. E. Ireland, Provincial Archivist at Victoria, says Steel mentions him twice in his book *Forty Years* (page 131): "In June 1878 a strong party of recruits arrived. Mr. James Christie came from Idaho with a large band of broncos . . ." Referring to a brutal murder committed during the winter of 1883 he says, "Mr. James Christie, an ex-member of the force, arrested the negro . . ." (page 131).

At the time our friend joined up in 1872 the Canadian West was peopled almost entirely by Indians who resented the coming of the white man to steal their land. And the trouble was intensified by wars between the Indian tribes themselves. Add to this the obstacles of nature which these few redcoats had to overcome, such as intense cold and blizzards in winter, intense heat in summer, swarming insects, floods, prairie fires, starving Indians when the buffalo were killed off, and one senses the debt the Canadian people owe those pioneer men of the Mounted Police, for their hard work and devotion to law and order. All for 75 cents a day which was later reduced to 40 cents. And when their officers pleaded with the government for paliasses for the force to sleep on, the authorities forced them to sleep on boards, and considered a bed of any kind a luxury. However, in those days they were young, their terms were for a few years only, and their future lay before them. With liberty in view, and health and hope abounding, they looked forward to a life of their own choice. How the majority of those veterans spent their old age I do not know. But I do know about one adventurous old veteran, and how he was treated in his "golden age."

As nearly as possible we have followed our wanderer from 1871 to 1883. And following from there, a short article in the *Seattle Press* of July 16, 1890 says in part, "He fought the Indians, hunted and prospected 'as far north as water will run', and a bare record of the thrilling incidents in his life would make a most wonderful story. He returned last spring from three years' trip into the Arctic region, taking in the Peace and Mackenzie rivers and Great Slave Lake."

And so, before searching the Olympics, his roving spirit had beckoned him northward. He would have been about 33 years of age when starting for his journey into the Arctic region. With his rather handsome features which nature had bestowed on him, plus his physical fitness through training, he must have been a splendid specimen of manhood.

I remember that he talked to me about his trip, but am sorry that only one story is salient, and that is the story of the husky dogs at Great Slave Lake, which story he enjoyed immensely. The food for the dogs consisted of fish which they caught for themselves from the

shallow water at the edge of the lake. When they were released from their burdens, the older, experienced dogs would rest by the side of the trail. The younger dogs would hurry to the lake-side to catch the fish which they carried up the trail to eat. But here the older dogs pounced on them and snatched away the fish for themselves, so that the younger dogs were forced to return to the lake and catch more fish. "... and that, Mrs. Worth, is Capitalism in action."

The next date I have is 1889 when we find him in the State of Washington exploring the Olympic Peninsula.

For this information I am indebted to Robert Hitchman of Seattle, who kindly sent me a booklet which he wrote captioned *Name Calling*.

Mr. Hitchman also sent me a book by Ruby El Hult which is a detailed, authentic and stirring history of that part of Washington State known as the Olympic Peninsula. It is called *Untamed Olympics*.

In 1889 the newly-elected governor of that state, Elisha Ferry, said, "Washington has her great unknown land like the interior of Africa, and a fine opportunity awaits some of Washington's explorers to acquire fame by unveiling the mystery which wraps the land encircled by the snow-capped Olympic Range." Consequently the Seattle Press took the matter up and published an article headed *A Chance for an Explorer*. A section of Washington 2,500 miles in the Olympic Mountains which has never been trodden by a white man.

This created a sensational interest and the Press received many offers from men who wished to accompany an expedition, if one were sent out. "One letter was exceptional. Its writer had already made up his mind to make an expedition into the Olympics he said, both because of 'an inherent love of adventure' and 'an ambition to accomplish what others had failed in'."

He also foretold how millmen, miners, and others would benefit by the opening up of this area. The commercial progress of this district which came later, proves how true Christie's foresight was. The letter was sent from North Yakima and dated November 6, 1889. Christie's offer was accepted and he became the leader of the expedition. Those who wish to get a deeper insight into the character of our hero, than this article can give, should study this book, which has an excellent map.

Mr. Hitchman's booklet takes us back to 1892 and makes me ashamed for not knowing more about our nearest neighbor's estate. And this is what Hitchman says of our Jim: "The Editor of the Seattle Press probably thought of the way in which James Bennett

made newspaper history when he sent Stanley in search of Livingston. In any event, when tall, tough James Halbold Christie offered his services to lead an expedition into the Olympics, his offer was accepted by the Press. Christie seemed well qualified for the task, he was a soldier of fortune, a prospector, an Indian fighter, and an explorer. As he put it, he was "no ambitious untried youth . . . but a man tried in all the vicissitudes of mountain, forest and plain life, schooled in the great plain of the North West Territories."

There were seven men selected for the Press exploring party, Christie, Captain Charles Adams Barnes, Harry Boyle Runnals, M.D., who after two months was called home by the illness of his wife; John Henry Crumback, John William Sims, and Christopher O'Connell Hayes.

This group left Port Angeles equipped for six months on December 8. By December 31 they had built a barge which they christened Gerty, and planned to barge up the Elwha River. On January 23, 1890, after fighting for days to move the craft upstream through rapids, Gerty was abandoned. "We were in the water for two hours (on the last day she was used) at one time up to our armpits. As we would emerge from the water in the more shallow places our clothes would freeze . . . we suffered terribly."

"This was a prelude to further discomfort and suffering. Shoes and clothing gave out, game was scarce; snow was deep; weather was miserable and going was tough. But the party kept at it, fighting through the forests and snow up the Elwha, circling through the mountains, moving on until the headwaters of the Quinault were reached. Following down stream, the group reached Lake Quinault on May 19, 1890. The explorers received a hero's welcome at Aberdeen. The Seattle Press issued a special edition on the expedition. The great challenge of the peninsula had been met. The party left many names on the map as reminders of its work; Mount Christie honors the leader. Except for Christie, nothing is known of the later life or death of the others."

After Mr. Christie completed the Press trip, he joined a party headed by Professor I. C. Russell for the ascent of Mount St. Elias, Alaska. This was sponsored jointly by the United States Geological Survey and National Geographic Society. Because of adverse weather conditions, no member of the group reached the top of St. Elias.

Having finished his work in the Olympics in May 1890 and then having gone to Alaska with the United States Geological Survey, we find him next in the North Okanagan, British Columbia, and here he spent the next 50 years of his life. Yet he never settled and

seemingly never had a contented mind. Although in his youth he fought against the Indians, during his life in the Okanagan he fought for them almost to the day of his death. Of this I know.

Mr. W. E. Ireland, Provincial Archivist, in his report to me says, "We have not been able to find any proof of when exactly he came to British Columbia but it could not have been later than 1892, for the records in the Lands Office show that on July 19, 1892, James H. Christie pre-empted the north half of the south east quarter of Section 32, Township 43, Osoyoos, amounting to 80 acres." In 1893 he pre-empted a fraction of the south half of the same quarter. Both these pre-emptions were crown-granted to him in August, 1894. This property is at the south end of Mabel Lake, and on the other side of Bobbie Burns Mountain from Trinity Valley, and the lake forms one of its boundaries.

Our wanderer was now about 42 years of age and would appear to be making an effort to settle down and make a home. In his surveying report J. P. Burnyeat says "At Mr. Christie's, the next point camped at, we found a numerous collection of vegetables and small fruits had been planted . . . In addition to this garden Mr. Christie had sown, between his meadow land and higher pastures, some 450 pounds of tame grasses and clover."

As I read the names of the other old-timers mentioned by Mr. Burnyeat, it is difficult for me to keep on my course, for I knew them so well. Some of these gentlemen were pre-empting, staying the necessary two years and improving their places to comply with regulations in order to sell to the first sucker who came along—generally a green Englishman who had no practical experience of farming. I did not know Jim Christie when I first went to Trinity Valley in June, 1901, but often met the other settlers mentioned in this report—H. P. Nelson and the Cartwrights. They sold their places to V. L. E. Miller, who was my neighbor for over 30 years. Mr. Miller was an Englishman, educated at Oxford and was a barrister. His British financial interests were in the Durham coal mines. His ambition was to obtain 10,000 acres of land in British Columbia; he would buy cheaply, sell for a hundred dollars an acre, and thereby become a millionaire. Many men did do this, and although Mr. Miller nearly attained the quantity, the cashing in plan went agley. As I supplied him with farm produce I received business notes occasionally, which were very difficult to read. He explained this by saying that when he couldn't spell a word, he wrote the first letter and finished the word with a line. So much for Oxford! But I digress.

From Mabel Lake, Mr. Ireland has traced our Jim through the

voters' lists. In the 1894 list he is a farmer at Mabel Lake. In 1898 he is a rancher at Burton City. Still at Burton City in 1900 he is a miner. By 1905 he was back in the Okanagan for the Vernon News of July 20, 1905 records the discovery of a seam of coal at Shorts Creek on Okanagan Lake. "The discovery was made by the well-known old-timer Jim Christie, who appears to be familiar with the mountains from the North Pole to California." From 1907 to 1910 he is listed in Vernon as prospector and timberman. By 1911 he had moved to two miles east of Armstrong. The mining Report for 1913 records as follows: "On Shorts Creek, on the west side of Okanagan Lake, 17 miles from Vernon, S. E. Smith, J. H. Christie, E. J. F. Ewings, and C. E. Smyth hold four coal leases of 640 acres each, . . . on which they have expended \$10,000 in development work and surveys . . ."

In 1916 Christie published *Indian Affairs in British Columbia*, a commentary on an Order-in-Council, and later *The Ulcer Enlarges*.

On August 9, 1917 Mr. Christie wrote a letter of over two columns to the Vernon News in which he took issue with a former report on Indian affairs in the same paper. I will try to give the gist of this letter as it shows his attitude toward the Indians, and his struggle to help them. And as one studies Jim Christie's life in Canada, one realizes that few white men had had the opportunity of knowing their circumstances and problems better than he did, for he had fraternized with them from early manhood.

The letter in the Vernon News to which he refers endeavoured to prove him wrong in his accusations that the Indians were not getting justice from those in authority. Mr. Christie was living near Armstrong and received five delegations of Indians from the Indian band at Penticton, 'representing to me the serious state in which their people were placed by the conduct of their affairs, and the influence of intruders on their reserves.' Mr. Christie journeyed to Penticton and met the Indians—25 to 30 males—and ". . . every statement previously made to me was verified by every man present." He finally agreed to lay their complaints before the superintendent of Indian Affairs.

After much correspondence between Mr. Christie and Ottawa and 18 months of hard work a commission enquiry took place in Penticton on July 9, 1917. Both the Indians and Christie objected to the interpreter selected by the authorities, but eventually submitted to same.

Between the time of their visits to Armstrong and when the

official enquiry was held in Penticton—18 months—Mr. Christie claimed that the Indians through the Government interpreter had been influenced to the point of confusion, so that many of them refuted the claims they had originally made. "Previous to the Commission an afternoon meeting between the interpreter and the Chief had completely changed the status of affairs on the Reserve." All evidence points to the fact that the untrained mind of the Indians was easily swayed, and Mr. Christie's attempts to reveal the truth were rebuffed.

One reference here is noteworthy. A vote was taken on whether they agreed to surrender land for the Government Experimental Farm. Mr. Christie commented as follows, "I found it impossible to find reason for a vote being taken for the surrender of land which had been expropriated by the Government some three years previous."

After the enquiry was over, "In my interview with fifteen Indians before leaving the Reserve, the opinions of those were freely expressed to me as follows. 'There is no hope for an Indian to get justice from any white man; the commissioner was crooked, the Indian agents were liars, and Christie had sold them to the commissioner. Yet they still wanted to fight for their land.' My reply was that fighting talk was fool talk; that if they could make no better show in fighting, than they could in telling a straight story, they would be damned foolish to fight, and they could be sure of one thing, they could count me out from any further connection with their affairs."

Yet in a later conversation between Christie and the Indians at Coyote Creek on July 18, 1917, he advised them to get a lawyer to handle their affairs. This they agreed to do and the agreement was signed by Chief Gaston, Louis Tonasket, Narcisse Jack, Pierre Jack, Symore Paul, and Stead Powers and the signatures witnessed by H. B. Armstrong.

And this is how his letter ends, "Will you, Mr. Inspector who so carelessly handles the truth and other men's character and good name, meet me on the public platform in your own home town of Vernon, and dare to submit my rendering of actual facts in connection with the affairs of the Okanagan Indians, and secure from a public audience their verdict upon the charges as laid for and in behalf of the people by me? Do not overlook the fact that a fair and just settlement of these Indian claims should be, and from my standpoint, is of the greatest interest of every individual within the Okanagan district. The immense significance of the future of these Indian lands and their improvement, the personnel of their inhabitants, the commercial possibilities, are all matters that deeply affect the future of the district as

a whole, and every individual whose interests are wrapped up in the Okanagan's future.

"The honour of the flag under which we live, the good name of the Dominion, whilst every life sacrificed on our battle front demands British fair play, to the humblest of our citizens, even to our native Indian, it is but human and we find that the fair-minded man is desirous of seeing but fair-play to the homeless dog in his struggle for existence. Yours truly, J. H. Christie, Armstrong, B.C.

This last paragraph of his letter I have quoted in full. It is most significant that after 50 years Canada is just awakening to the truth of everything told therein, and one wonders if at last we shall do something about it worth doing.

We destroyed their traditional way of living, fenced them in and handicapped them. While the Indian suffers, Canada suffers. To Christie and his supporters we owe much for their agitation on this question.

Mr. Harold Beairsto, one of Vernon's revered citizens, has sent me a short sketch which reveals certain traits of Jim Christie's character, and it is told in such a way that it makes us feel that we were there and saw it: "He was quite a familiar figure in Vernon when I came here forty years ago and for some reason, which is hard to explain, one would invariably look back over his shoulder to watch the tall, ramrod-straight character stride down the street throwing his right arm in wide sweeps as he walked along, and pausing here and there to speak with some old-timer like James Vallance or Arthur Cochrane or Joe Harwood, or with some other who is no longer with us. There was a certain dignity about his carriage, reminding one of the dignified old Indians one had known, but there was a distinct swagger about his manner, too, which was not typical of the Indian. You will understand I know, that these are only impressions I received from observation and are not based on any knowledge of the man's parentage, or even his nationality.

"I remember well seeing him pass my school with his team from the direction of Bushey Park many times, the box of his wagon containing a bundle of hay and a sack of grain, and possibly two or three Indian women sitting on the floor boards. The horses seldom moved at more than a slow amble if they could help themselves.

"Once when I played the part of a factor heading a fur brigade down Barnard Avenue, and dressed in a long black coat, the cravat, and the beaver hat, he told me I made a 'damned poor factor', and although it was a shock to my ego, I expect he was right."

I have searched the local papers of that time for a notice of his death, but in vain. The Campbell and Ross Funeral Parlours told me

that he was buried by the Salvation Army in Vernon cemetery, in Lot 14, Block 137 at the age of 89. The City record says 92. From what he told me and as reported to me by the Ottawa authorities he would be 91½ years when he died on June 15, 1942.

Last week I visited Lot 14, Block 137. Through the help of the man at the cemetery and a map, we found the spot under which he was buried; there was nothing to indicate that human remains lay underneath.

As a Canadian citizen he spent about eight years of his life in the United States. They have written highly of him in their history and a mountain is named in his honour.

He gave to Canada 64 years of courage and struggle, and historical records of central Canada acknowledge his contribution with praise. But in the Okanagan where he lived for fifty years, never ceasing his humanitarian efforts and where he died, we have not even a mole-hill to remember him by.

Jim Christie's dead body would not concern him, but of Jim Christie alive he was very proud, and he would like the world to know that regardless of how many mountains he climbed, human brotherhood was his goal.

After reading a copy of this article, Robert Hitchman has this to say:

"You report your visit to James Christie's grave. The least we can do is see that this is properly marked. I have discussed this with Mr. LeRoy, director of the Washington State Historical Society, and he agreed readily that the Society should assist in this project. As a matter of fact, the Society could finance the cost of a marker but we believe that others should share in the task."

This writer will introduce the matter to our local Historical Society, and hopes that eventually something worthwhile will be accomplished.

Meanwhile Dr. Ross, who is responsible for much of the furnishing of Vernon's new museum, has kindly promised to place pictures, etc., in memory of our worthy pioneer.

Grace Worth