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“Denman and Hornby Islands Want Improved Ferry Service to Buckley Bay”

(*The Daily Colonist*, October 28, 1929)

by Graham Brazier

In October of 1929 a group of residents of both Denman and Hornby Islands sought to justify a request for a subsidized ferry service between Vancouver Island and Denman Island with the news that there were now “sixty-eight car owners” among them. The ferry, they argued, should be “capable of carrying automobiles, livestock and machinery, as well as passengers” and it was further justified by the observation that “the development of the tourist attractions of these islands in recent summers has been stimulated by the establishment of motor camps linked to Vancouver Island by launch service.” It seems that the privately operated ‘launch service’ which consisted of a raft towed by a tug boat, was not able to meet the tourist demand that a subsidized system operating “twice daily across the sound at reasonable rates” could.

It was well into May of 1930 before the provincial government announced its intention to initiate a ferry system “in order to afford the farmers of Denman a better market for their products in a fresh condition than has been possible under the existing means of communication by steamer plying less frequently.... Denman,” *The Daily Colonist* noted, “has a population of about 250, and Hornby sixty persons. On the latter is the Tribune Bay camp, connected by launch with Bowser.” Though it wasn’t clear how a ferry service between Buckley Bay and Denman Island would assist those bound for the ‘Tribune Bay camp’ it appears that the interests of tourists needed to be acknowledged.

Scheduled ferry service between Vancouver Island and Denman was inaugurated, with much hoopla, on August 14, 1930 when the “MV Garry Point” towed a scow with a three-car capacity back and forth across Baynes Sound three times a day. This quelled the voices of discontent on Denman and perhaps inspired Hornby residents to make a case for better service to their island at a meeting of the Courtenay Board of Trade in February of 1931. *The Daily Colonist* reported that “better ferry service between Hornby Island and Vancouver Island was again up for discussion. J. Ford, a resident of Hornby Island was present, and it was agreed that in conjunction with the transportation committee he would call a meeting of the Hornby Islanders to ascertain the wish of the majority as to whether the ferry should serve direct between Hornby and Vancouver Island or via Denman Island. A direct service, it was pointed out, would save handling freight and passengers several times. The petition, signed by thirty of the Islanders, was handed to the transportation committee.” Apparently this proposal was not well received as no further mention of it has surfaced.

Denman Island ferry capacity was largely stagnant throughout the 1930’s and well into the 1940’s when *The Daily Colonist* reported it became “obvious that a larger ferry was needed as so many cars and passengers were going over in summer that there were

