

## HISTORY OF TEXADA'S MEDICAL SERVICES

Texada's hospital had flashy beginnings. The "Opera House" was built by volunteers in Van Anda on the site of the current school and proved to be a popular venue for dances, shows and community gatherings. Little did revellers know that by 1900 the dance floor would become two public hospital wards (ten beds each), a private ward and operating room.

The winter of 1907/08 became memorable when the temperature dropped to -19 degrees inside! Thirteen patients shared three hotwater bottles and Dr. MacDermot (first resident physician) acted as plumber to thaw the waterlines and toilets.

When they left Texada in 1907, owner Tacoma Steel donated the hospital to the Columbia Coast Mission. Patients would arrive from up and down the coast ferried by the mission boat "MV Columbia". Doctor Forbes (later Doctors Keith and Marlatt) presided. In 1920 Dr. Marlatt moved to Powell River to take charge of the new St. Luke's Hospital and our hospital closed, its equipment transported to Alert Bay.



Meanwhile in Blubber Bay, Pacific Lime hired doctors Terry Lougheed (grandfather of the future premier), Sutherland and Schwalm.

The next few years were marked by irregular medical services. Bill Young would rush expectant mothers to Powell River in his 30-foot "Louvain" often braving wild conditions to save a life. Later, Ben Nicholas operated three water taxis which made more frequent trips.

In the 1960's Dr. Anne Lees travelled from Powell River to provide consultations in the Legion basement. In Gillies Bay retired Dr. MacCallum provided care from his tiny backyard office until 1968.

In 1969 Texada Mines decided to build a modern clinic (cost \$40,000) to serve its growing employee family community. Dr. Garner became the full-time physician followed by Dr. Giaslon. Texada Mines sold the clinic to the community for \$1 when it closed in 1977. Later, doctors MacKenzie, Andrucson and Black practiced.

Over time there have been many challenges in providing medical services to our isolated community, many of which we continue to face today.