

IT'S YOUR BUSINESS

By Bill Fletcher, Vancouver Sun Business Editor

B.C. Opportunities Still Abound

I listened impatiently the other day to a young man bemoaning his claim that there aren't the opportunities for youth in B.C. today that there were in the good old days.

He cited the cases of a couple of free-wheeling free enterprises...who made fortunes from our natural resources.

"What chance is there today?" he asked. "The big companies control everything."

In the field of lumbering to which he referred, my young friend might be right. But the **smart high school and university graduates are finding there is profit in the principle:** "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em."

Which gives me a chance to tell the story of a teen-age English immigrant I met last week. This lad is only 19 but I think his accomplishments during the last two years, in a strange land, might well be emulated by some of our less ambitious young Canadians who can't see opportunities in B.C. for looking at them.

Godfrey "Jeff" Watts is the son of a small shopkeeper in London's East End. At the age of 17 he figures his future lay in British Columbia. In addition Jeff was keen for a little old fashioned adventure.

Teen-Ager With a \$6,000 Stake

Both the union and company men-- he was now with the big Morrison-Knudsen construction company--liked his drive and gave him every chance. Soon Jeff was a full-fledged boilermaker.

In his spare hours he mopped the floors in the company commissary. He also played an active role in the Boy Scout group and expropriated a beaten up yellow jeep from the Kemano junk pile to take his young charges on field trips.

Watts saved most of his money but he also had the foresight to invest some of it in Alcan stock.

Recently he had a long talk with an M&K accountant whose father is an engineering professor at the University of Idaho in Moscow. The decision was quickly made that he should go to Idaho and study for an engineering degree.

Young Jeff figured up his assets. They amounted to a comfortable \$6,000. M&K assured him he had a job with them any time he wanted it to help finance his education. Last week he was in

Vancouver to catch a plane for a brief visit with his family in London before entering the university. Jeff still had grease under his fingernails but there were stars in his eyes.

“Are there opportunities for young men in B.C. today?” I couldn’t bring myself to ask him the question. I knew he’d look at me as if he thought I was crazy.