

PICTOU BOYS BACK FROM TRIP AROUND THE WORLD.

Took Ice Breaker to Russia—Tell About Conditions in Russia Just Before Revolution.

There arrived in Pictou on Wednesday night the following Pictou boys who had just completed a trip around the world: James MacDonald, Hubert Turner, Toney River; Henry MacMaster, John Murray, William MacLeod, Waterside; Dave Horton, Trenton.

These men were members of the crew of the former Canadian ice-breaker, J. D. Hazen, now the Russian ice breaker Mikula Selianinatoitch. They left Montreal on December 1 last in the ice breaker, under command of Capt. John L. Read, and after coaling at North Sydney set sail for Archangel on the White sea. On January 5 they sighted the southern shores of Greenland. On January 9 they passed north of Iceland and on January 16 arrived at Ucanka, a new Russian port in the north. The war, they report, has created many new towns on the northern shores of Russia, used for centres for receiving and distributing munitions of war and for exporting products raised by the country.

At Ucanka the Pictonians saw a boat which had been torpedoed and run ashore. On January 22 they left there on the journey up the White sea, breaking ice and towing ships that had been fast in ice. They arrived at Accomia, practically a suburb of Archangel, on January 25. They were to have stayed there for some time, but there was no room for the boat, so inadequate were the transportation facilities, so they moved on the 26th to Solombo, another small place nearer Archangel.

Was Blessing in Disguise.

The Pictonians perhaps owe their lives to the fact that there was no room for their boat at Accomia, for while they were at Solombo news came of a terrific explosion at the former place in which 300 had been killed and a great deal of property destroyed. They did not learn the cause of the explosion.

On February 1 the ship was taken over by the Russian crew and the Canucks left for Petrograd, going the first eight miles, to Archangel, by sleighs in 24 below zero weather, and from Archangel to the Russian capital by train, which was supposed to make the trip in thirty-six hours, but generally takes three days, they state. The locomotives burn wood.

Many Refugees in Capital.

They arrived in Petrograd and spent three weeks in that interesting place. It is said that there are nearly as many refugees in Petrograd today as the normal population. It is one of the world's largest cities, however, having several million people, and in many ways progressive and modern. It was here they heard of and saw certain phases of the revolution. They saw hundreds of people waiting in line for bread, not people of the poorest classes, but well-to-do people wearing furs.

Grain and Stock Galore.

A few days afterwards, on their trip across Russia and Siberia to the Pacific, they saw grain piled up by the millions of bushels and livestock by the thousand. Owing to inadequate organization, however, people were starving for bread and meat in the cities of Russia at the same time. This apparent paradox, it is said, was due mostly to the pro-German influence in Russia, who were bent on making conditions as bad as possible so that Russia might drop out of the war.

Strikes Led to Revolution.

The revolution, as far as they could learn, started through workmen of Petrograd and other cities striking for more pay, more food and better conditions. All these were, of course, refused by the fat-headed autocracy, with the final result that the dissatisfaction crystallized into nation-wide rebellion and the czar and his court were overthrown.

The trip from Petrograd to Vladivostok was a memorable one and took 14 days. Canadians are wont to talk of the long train schedules, but the train running between Petrograd and Vladivostok, supposed to run daily, traverses a distance of over 5000 miles. In addition to this slow train there is a "de luxe" special which makes the distance in ten days, but goes only once a week. At one point in the mountains the passengers could see four tracks below them, so does the road wind around the peaks.

Vladivostok Hive of Industry.

Vladivostok is growing like the towns of western Canada grew a few years ago, except that it is a port. The hotels there were full and there was a busy hum everywhere. An explosion and fire occurred the night the crew landed. They left there on a Japanese ship on March 15 for Tsuga, Japan, thence to Yokohama, where they caught the Empress of Russia for Vancouver.

The Pictonians had an experience which comes to but few, to have travelled around the world. The crew of the ice-breaker consisted of about 80 men, 25 of whom were left at Yokohama because the Empress of Russia did not have the accommodation to take them across on this trip. Five or six of the men live in Montreal and were paid off there, Capt. Read remaining over there for a day or two.

MacDonald, Turner and Horton also made the trip to Russia with Capt. Read in the Minto.

"Boots" English stopped off with relatives in Vancouver.

Bob McEwen was one of those left in Yokohama.