

LABORERS ARE ANCHORED.

Contract to Wait Until Cleanup for Wages.

Otherwise there would now be scarcity of help on creeks—Majority would leave for Nome.

Although in many cases both employer and employee were very careless in the matter of explicitness of contract when the latter was last fall engaged by the former to labor on his claim for the working season, yet in the majority of cases it was an unwritten, understood agreement that unless sooner discharged the wage earner was to stay with his work until the end of the season at which time he would be paid for his services.

Major Perry, presiding magistrate, has held, and very justly, too, that even where there is a written contract by which the laborer agrees to wait until the cleanup for his pay, that contract becomes in non effect in case of the laborer's discharge unless it can be conclusively shown that there existed good and sufficient reason for such discharge—that the laborer had ceased to faithfully perform the duties for which he was employed, or had been a disturbing factor in the camp, or for some other very flagrant cause, making his retention on the claim injurious to the interests of the operator. But in cases where the laborer has, of his own free will and accord terminated the period of his employ the court has held, and with equal justice, that for such laborer the pay day will not come until the cleanup.

This latter interpretation and application of the law has undoubtedly been the means of inducing many hundreds of men now employed on the various claims in the Klondike district to continue on as they are instead of quitting their positions and joining in the mad rush over the ice, with Nome as their Mecca. With a more loose and liberal construction on the law as applying to unwritten agreements governing the matter of time for the payment of wages, fully one half the claims now being operated in this district would be shut down for want of labor to work them, the courts would be crowded with litigants—men suing for hire and claim owners and operators protesting against immediate payment, which immediate payment would financially ruin many of them and greatly embarrass three-fourths of the remainder.

A number of claim owners and claim operators, as well as many claim laborers, have lately been interviewed by a representative of the Daily Nugget and a general summing up of the various accounts of conditions as they now exist on fully one-half the claims, justifies the assertion that a general feeling of unrest and dissatisfaction prevails. The relations between employer and employed are in many instances very much strained, and yet each has the other to some extent in his power. The employer knows that if he discharges a man the money must be forthcoming to pay him and in many cases the full limit has been raised on the claim and the next money paid on it must be washed from the dump, and in case the dump is washed to any great extent, the other laborers are apt to think the chances for their pay being in it by cleanup time are waning, and the result will be that new trouble will emanate from that source.

On the other hand, the employee knows that if he voluntarily leaves his position he will not be able to collect the wages due him and without which he will not be able to go to Nome or to keep himself in Dawson until his pay day comes, therefore, no matter how anxious he may be to join the throng on the down river journey he is not able to do so, and he is forced, therefore, to continue where he is although

his work may have become to him nothing more than a treadmill. He has lost interest in his employer's welfare and feels very much as the man feels who is doing a 90 days' sentence on the royal woodpile, anxiously looking forward to and counting the days that must elapse before the arrival of the time when he will be a free man. He is practically anchored and must stay where he is for some months to come, no matter how anxious he may be to sever his connections with his position.

This is the condition in which matters stand today on, it is safe to assert, fully two thirds of the claims being operated in the Klondike, and but for this condition the exodus from this point to Nome would be fully one-half larger than it already is.

Concert at the Grand.

The concert at the Palace Grand last night was enjoyed by a well pleased audience whose numbers, however, were not as large as usual owing to the intensely cold weather prevailing. All the boxes were occupied and the balcony seats were all sold, but the main floor might have accommodated a great many more people than were present.

The orchestra, as a result of repeated performances and rehearsals worked in splendid concert to the satisfaction of all who were present.

Miss Beatrice Lorne captured the audience as she has repeatedly done and was forced to respond to four recalls. Miss Lorne possesses a peculiarly clear and sympathetic voice which has proven on numerous occasions its power over an audience.

Mrs. Leroy Tozier gave two selections and acceded to repeated encores with a third. Mrs. Tozier's efforts met with hearty and continued applause, demonstrating the pleasure which her contribution to the entertainment afforded her hearers. Mr. Erhardt sang "The Lost Chord" in his usual cultivated style. His singing was heartily appreciated and was rewarded with enthusiastic applause. The program was as follows:

March, "Semper Fidelis," Sousa; Potpourri from opera "Martha," Flotow; (a) song, "La Gitana," (b) song, "Dear Heart," by request, Miss Beatrice Lorne; concert waltz, "Wine, Women and Song," J. Strauss; intermezzo symphony from "Cavalliera Rusticana," Mascagni; song, "Lost Chord," Sullivan, E. Erhardt; grand selection from opera "Maritana," Wallace; "Medley" overture, Boettger; (a) song, "In the Shadow of the Pines," (b) song, "Bedouin Love," Pipsuti, Mrs. L. Tozier; Caprice, Rosas.

At the conclusion of the program, Eddie O'Brien announced the Probst benefit for next Sunday night and stated that a splendid entertainment would be given. The program will be submitted to Mr. Ogilvie and that gentleman is to blue pencil anything of an unsuitable nature which may appear thereon.

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