

Canal routes. For on landing there from the ocean steamer, the goods of the traveller, if bought in Canada—his horses are allowed through duty free—have to pay duty to the United States Government, or, if the quantity is large enough, the traveller can avoid paying custom charges by having his goods placed under the charge of a custom officer, who accompanies them through the narrow strip of United States territory until the Canadian boundary at the lakes is reached. The charge for this service is, I believe, seven dollars per day. On reaching the latter line, if he has bills to prove that his outfit was bought in any part of Canada, he passes through free of charge.

As it frequently happens that prospectors coming from the United States ports are literally penniless by the time they reach the Canadian line at the lakes, and cannot pay the Canadian duties, the custom officials there resort to a novel expedient of collecting the duty: they make them work on any of the numerous jobs entailed by the building of the post, crediting them with a daily wage at current rates. Though in some cases it is said the delay thus caused has prevented the men from reaching their destination before ice on the Yukon stopped their progress, thus obliging them to pass the winter in some hastily constructed river-side shelter, the plan has so far worked fairly well without causing serious friction.

There are two or three other, so-called "all Canadian," routes to Klondike from the South and from the East. Of these, by far the best is the Stikkeen route, which, as the name indicates, follows up that river for about one hundred and fifty miles to Telegraph Creek, the old starting-point for the once-famous Cassiar mines, and thence via Teslin Lake and the Hootalinqua River. This route is spoken of very favourably, and seems to present none of the bad features that caused so much misery and loss on the Lynn Canal routes during the past summer. The watersheds crossed by the trail from the Stikkeen River to Teslin Lake are not ice

and snow-covered passes, and though the transportation of goods even by that route is possible only during four or five months of the year, when the Stikkeen is navigable for light river-steamers, it looks as if that were an easier route than over the Lynn Canal passes. However, one must remember that changes in the way of improvements to trails can be carried out so quickly by the willing hands of hundreds of gold-seekers or by persons interested in attracting travel, that it is unwise to express decided opinions concerning the advantages of the several routes. The object of these pages is merely to indicate their whereabouts and to sound a note of warning to exercise care in following the advice of pecuniarily interested agents, whose object it is to attract travellers to one special route. By the time travel will be possible next spring, the Canadian Government will, no doubt, have taken steps that reliable information on this important point is made public.* Since the writer's brief visit to Alaska, many changes have occurred, and recent events will make even more sweeping and speedy alterations the rule rather than the exception.

All the news so far to hand from the Klondike and its tributaries, as well as from the Stewart River, confirms the phenomenal richness of the stream-beds, more particularly so considering the small amount of work so far expended on claims. The latter is, of course, accounted for by the extreme remoteness of the spot, the scarcity and great price of labour—men working for others obtaining £3 per day—and the costliness of all supplies, flour being sold last spring, just before the arrival of the first steamer, at the rate of £14 per sack of 50 lb. Your "old timer," the man who has knocked about all his life in the mining camps of California, Idaho, and British Columbia, loves to see "grub sky-high," for it is the surest indication that "dust" is plentiful. Diggings are rich when a bottle of beer costs a sovereign, and whisky sells at a dollar the nip. But

* The newspapers report that no fewer than seventeen railway charters over the various Yukon routes have been applied for.