

more useful, in case of difficulty, than would be an ordinary clerk. These were the reasons why these men were sent, and I am in the judgment of the House as to whether they were not good. The others I do not remember, who went up in connection with the party, but they were simply subordinates.

When the party got to Skagway, it was found that the assistant commissioner of Mounted Police had not got his supplies across. I have been asked, why Major Walsh did not get through by water to Dawson City. I have just given the reason. If the assistant commissioner of Mounted Police had got his supplies across in time—even in five times as long as it took Major Walsh and myself to put them across when we were there—Major Walsh and his party would have gone on to Dawson City before the water froze. But the assistant commissioner had not got his supplies across, and it would have been madness to send this party across the mountains, without any knowledge of where they were going, without a proper amount of supplies, and when the information at our disposal was, that the people in Dawson would be starving, and that it would be little less than a crime to send one additional man there without supplies for himself. So, regardless of expense, we put the supplies across the pass ourselves, and Major Walsh, Mr. Ogilvie and myself went to explore and get some information, and, as quickly as possible, the other party went across. They started down the river, but valuable time had been lost, and the result was, that the ten or fifteen days lost in putting the supplies across by the assistant commissioner was just the time that prevented the party getting into Dawson City before it was frozen in.

I am not sure that that was an unmixed evil. On the contrary, I think it was rather providential, because, as a result, Major Walsh sent off Judge Maguire and Mr. Wade and Mr. McGregor, and the rest of the party and himself waited for some time where they were frozen in, on the banks of the river. Major Walsh then heard that a party purporting to be an American relief expedition was coming in, and from what he heard of the dangers and difficulties regarding encroachments upon the boundary, which he, the chief officer of the Government, would have been held responsible for, he deemed it his duty to go down to the boundary line to find out what was going on, and so he went back to Lake Bennett. From that time to the following spring he devoted himself to getting the supplies down to Lake Lebarge, so that they would get into Dawson City a considerable time before any supplies could get up by the Lower Yukon, via St. Michael. During that time, they put up police posts upon the line of travel, they gave supplies and shelter to the people coming out; and if hon. gentlemen opposite will look back at the

press of that day, they will find it was the universal judgment that Major Walsh and his men on that trail saved the lives of hundreds of people who were coming in. Then, when the spring came and the water opened at Lake Lebarge, Major Walsh took the supplies down the river, where they had a transport. At an enormous sacrifice of time and labour and money, these supplies were taken to the foot of Lake Lebarge and brought to Dawson City in time to prevent any scarcity there, before any supplies could be got up the river for those people who did not have their supplies with them.

Up to that time there had not been in any way whatever a suggestion that Major Walsh had not performed his duty as a commissioner of this Government in a manner that was altogether above criticism. Let me now describe what happened. Major Walsh got in there on the 21st May, 1897. When you are looking back at these things, it seems a long time. Judging by the number of editorials and interviews we have had on the Yukon district, it might be fifty years ago since Major Walsh got into Dawson City, but it was only the 21st of last May he got there. Let us bear that in mind—only about ten months ago. And he got there after a winter of arduous toil, which, in all probability, has seriously injured his constitution for the rest of his life. I venture to say—and this ought fairly to be taken into consideration, when criticising these men—that there is no one of them who will not bear in his constitution the marks of the hardship of that winter as long as he lives. When I was there meeting prospectors upon the trail, meeting boats containing prospectors passing along the river and along the lake, I inquired of the people where they were going, and what they were going to do. What did they tell me? That was in the fall of 1897, when we went through the pass for the purpose of getting some preliminary information, and when our men were taking supplies through the pass so that Major Walsh and his party could get down the river. We saw those men and talked with a large number of them, and they told us that they were not going to Dawson City. In fact, it was almost impossible to find a man, in all that host of people camped along the trail and getting ready to go down, who said he was going to Dawson. These men had the idea at that time that the Dawson district was very limited, that the good claims near Dawson were all taken up, and they told us they were going to the Pelly, they were going to the White River, they were going to the Hootalinqua, that they were going anywhere and everywhere except to Dawson. And the result was that Mr. Ogilvie and I came back fully assured that there was not going to be any great number of people at Dawson. And so we came to the conclusion that the proper place for the head of the Government was Fort Selkirk, in the middle of the district, because