

The Klondike Nugget

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TUESDAY, JULY 12, 1898

THE LUMBER SITUATION.

An interesting talk has been recently had with Messrs. Hobbs & Smith regarding the lumber situation which should be well digested by our citizens. The gentlemen are erecting a sawmill in conjunction with their woodworking plant and expect to have it in operation at once. They have every opportunity of being posted in the matter of the supply of building material, Mr. Hobbs especially, for he was the first white man to ever pass over the Skagaway trail, and he also has the distinction of being the first to come in over the ice.

It is their opinion as well as the judgment of all old-timers we have seen on the subject, that the advent of winter is going to find possibly as many as half of the inhabitants of Dawson without adequate shelter or means of providing it. It is the unanimous conviction of those who ought to know that all the mills present and prospective for this summer, cannot possibly cut but a portion of the lumber or building logs necessary for the comfort and safety of Dawson's next winter's population. More than that, in the effort to keep the supply of building material somewhere in sight of the demand the mills are having to do what they know to be injurious to the mining industry by which they all live. The miners up the gulch must needs use every spring, miles upon miles of sluice boxes and water ways. Every foot of the lumber must be of the widest dimensions and best quality. Only the pick of the logs arriving in Dawson during the summer months can be used for sluice box lumber. If the large logs were all sawed for this purpose there would not be too many, yet "needs must where the devil drives" and everything must go to satisfy the demand for building material.

Mr. Hobbs deplors such a condition of affairs from the standpoint of an old-timer, while the benevolent Father Judge is just as concerned about it from the point of view of a humanitarian. He has spent so many years in Alaska and the Northwest Territory that he views with alarm the approach of winter with the thousands and thousands of newcomers totally unprovided with anything but canvas shelter. It is conceded on all sides that the supply of building material is entirely inadequate. Rows of buildings of the flimsiest construction are being erected. Even the frame structures are of a temporary nature and will require as much again lumber as has already been used to render them habitable. In the absence of lots of good building and wall paper, experience has shown that the only way in which a frame building can be built suitable for Klondike winter temperature is to build it with double walls and to fill in the intervening space with sawdust or packed moss—like a refrigerator for illustration. What will keep out heat will also keep it in. With fuel at sixty to seventy dollars a cord great roaring fires cannot be maintained night and day, so that to retain even a merely livable temperature the thickest of walls and snugest of cabins are required.

The recent order from Ottawa forbidding the issuing of any more permits to cut either house logs or cordwood is thought to be an unwise measure by many of our people. The restricted issue of the permits would have brought

to Dawson an abundance of the very material which it is conceded is going to be scarce. Under the present orders if you wish to cut for sale either house logs or firewood, one must first hunt up somebody who is already in possession of a permit and must pay a good royalty to that individual for the use of it. Would-be lumbermen are on our streets by thousands yet are unable to throw themselves into the breach and supply us with an actual necessity. There are those among our best people who even doubt the wisdom of closing our sawmills one day in seven. There are mills all the way from Dawson to the head of Lake Linderman; but their output will never perceptibly swell the stock in Dawson's depleted lumber yards. Their limited product either reaches here in the form of boats or is being used up in the immediate vicinity of the mills themselves. The supply of cabins at this very moment is unequal to the demand, even with summer breezes rendering them a luxury rather than a necessity. Scarcity regulates prices, and only the other day a man was heard asking a hundred and fifty dollars a month rent for his cabin on the hillside back of Dawson. If such is the condition in July how many of our new citizens will be able to afford a house in December? Would anyone be really injured by the issue of enough permits to bring down cabin material to living Dawson prices?

OUR SATURDAY SPECIAL.

The special edition of THE NUGGET issued Saturday afternoon went like hot cakes. The hand press on which it was printed could not be operated fast enough to supply the demand, for awhile, and it sold all night and all day Sunday. It contained facts the people were after. This paper does not desire to be sensational, but the facts presented in that issue were of a decidedly sensational character. The people have known for a long time there was "something rotten in Denmark," but that special conveyed surprising information. Our regular Saturday paper was on the press Friday night. The vigilant NUGGET man was on the streets with eyes and ears open. The stamper attracted his attention and the management of the paper was consulted. All hands turned to, with the result that after a night of vigilant search and watching, the details were arrived at and copy for the special prepared. Every fact stated was verified, and many charges which would have been more sensational and implicated one or two officials outside of the gold commissioner's office were omitted, not because we could not prove them, but because the truth is too often a libel under Canadian law.

In addition to what was published, two special correspondents were dispatched to Dominion creek with the stamper, to watch movements there and see if the crooked work is continued. Not one word, except of approbation, of THE NUGGET's course has been heard from any quarter from the time the first special appeared on the streets up to this writing.

That special gave direct evidence in all its statements. It went farther, and made specific charges of incompetency in the handling of the business of one of the most important public offices in the district. The people have known this for some time but have had to submit. With this last outrage heaped upon the many others they now demand that something be done, and that quickly.

The Toronto Mail and Empire of June 16 contains a dispatch from Ottawa to the effect that the Hon. Wm. Ogilvie will leave in a few weeks. The dispatch states it is believed he goes to take the place of Major Walsh as administrator. If this is a fact, it will not be welcome news for the people of this district. A great many here who have secured nothing whatever came here because of Mr. Ogilvie's glowing accounts of the wealth of the country. The pernicious laws now enforced here are a direct result of his highly colored reports. He will not be kindly received here as an administrator, and we sincerely hope there is no foundation in truth in the report.

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