

The Klondike Nugget

ISSUED SEMI-WEEKLY

On Wednesday and Saturday

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NOTICE

When a newspaper offers its advertising space at a nominal figure, it is a practical admission of "no circulation." THE KLONDIKE NUGGET asks a good figure for its space and in justification thereof guarantees to its advertisers a paid circulation five times that of any other paper published between Juneau and the North Pole.

The NUGGET has a regular carrier and express service covering Bonanza, Eldorado, Hunker, Sulphur and Dominion creeks and tributaries. Mail orders taken and prompt delivery guaranteed on all the above. Orders for delivery of papers, mail or express may be left at this office or given to creek agents.

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF.

When a legislative body is independent of the people whom it governs and cannot be held by that people to account for its acts, laws are absolutely certain to be passed which the people do not want. It was so in the days when the provinces subjugated by the Roman arms were placed under the authority of governors sent out from the capital. The provincial government was expected to furnish a certain quota of the imperial city's revenues and when that had been accomplished, it was the governor's privilege to squeeze out of his helpless subjects all that he should require for his own personal uses. The manner in which the first Caesar satisfied the demands of his creditors to the extent of millions is a story with which every school boy is familiar. A somewhat parallel condition existed during the troublesome period of the early settlement of the American colonies. The governors and councils sent out to frame and execute laws were responsible, not to the people who were expected to render obedience to those laws, but to a ministry with headquarters 5000 miles across the Atlantic and totally ignorant as to what measures would best suit the requirements and meet the wishes of the colonists. As a matter of fact the revenue question was the only one which was given any serious consideration. Provided that sufficient revenue was turned into the coffers, few questions were asked. The result of that policy is likewise a matter of history.

And now again, this time in the Yukon territory we find the inevitable repetition of history. This territory is governed by the Yukon council, a body not elected by the people for whom it passes ordinances and therefore not responsible to them. For the injustice that has been worked upon the people of the Yukon through royalty taxes, timber exactions, military surveillance, etc., etc., the Ottawa government must be held responsible, and some day or other will be brought before the bar of an outraged public for an accounting. There is no escaping the conclusion that the tendency of Yukon legislation thus far has been to depopulate the country. Thousands of men who under different conditions would today be prospecting the creeks and developing the resources of this territory have been driven to the lower country and are giving to it the benefit of their energies. That the folly of this suicidal policy will soon dawn upon the minds of those in authority at Ottawa is something to be devoutly hoped.

Meanwhile for local legislation we are dependent upon the Yukon council. In justice to the gentlemen constituting this body it must be said that for the most part they seem disposed to act fairly toward this community. The promptness with which the dog ordinance was annulled when attention had been called to the harshness of that unpopular measure, deserves special mention. But on the other hand had the Yukon council been dependent upon the citizens of Dawson for their tenure of office, such an act would never have been passed. In a

word, being independent of the public, no obligation rests upon them to consult public opinion when laws are to be passed. As a natural sequence, more or less unpopular legislation must be expected.

TO MR. WILLISON.

The only excuse ever offered for the collection of royalty on firewood from the holders of free miners' certificates is that it is the custom all over Canada. Late papers from Vancouver, B. C., give us the information that an attempt is being made there to collect a royalty of 25c per cord, but it must be born in mind that this is not from holders of free miners' certificates but from men who pay no other taxes than the royalty; neither is it from men who are simply hauling wood for their own use, but from men who are in commerce in that they are hauling the wood to town to sell to who ever they want it. We are in a position to state positively that when the six-mile reservation was first made of the timber around Dawson, it was genuinely made for the benefit of that portion of Dawson's inhabitants who should desire to take a sled and haul wood for their own consumption. It was not intended that holders of certificates should be charged a royalty upon what they themselves cut, hauled and burned. Timber Agent Willison's attention is called to the fact that his zeal in collecting this paltry and unwarranted royalty from a defenceless people has failed to endear him to the poor and impoverished government he so desired to befriend, as is evidenced by the appointment of a man to take his place without Mr. Willison even being advised of that fact. Neither has it given him the love or respect of the people, and if he should be retired shortly to private life he will learn to his sorrow by personal contact with men as non-influential as himself that the greatest mistake a man can ever make is an attempt to work a "stand-in" with a fickle government by oppression of the common people.

The collection of a royalty of 50c per cord from men holding a printed permit at \$10 a permit—to cut whatever wood they may need for building, mining or for fuel, cannot be justified upon any grounds whatsoever. In 1893 a small town in Kansas found itself overburdened with oppressive taxes collected by money loaners, mortgage agents, railroad bounty tax and in diverse other ways. The people complained bitterly but took no decisive action until the year we speak of when the great panic precipitated so much suffering that the people rebelled and remedied the growing evil effectively and suddenly. It was done by moving in a body across the near-by county line and leaving the rapacious officials and agents in sole possession. It is needless to say that everything left behind became valueless at once to the ruin of the agents and impoverishment of the officials. Some such condition is going to prevail here in the near future for a great exodus is in process of incubation. We would still further call the attention of Mr. Willison to the fact that the policy adopted by himself and brother officials of milking the Yukon cow to the very last drop is overthrowing his party in Canada—and many here will say Amen! when that shall have happened.

TEMPERATURES.

The "chee chako" element in the population of the Yukon largely preponderates and all came here prepared to be surprised by many things. But the very last thing the newcomer expected was that in December, around Christmas, the weather would be almost too mild for comfort—milder than New England and gentler than lower Canada. So soft is it that pedestrians are troubled with damp feet which get cold if one has to stand around for a few minutes.

There is a growing belief that the temperatures of past years, as reported by returned Yukoners are not at all the most reliable in the world. Temperatures of from 80 to 90 degrees below zero have been reported and Lieutenant Greeley's report on thermometers in extreme climates is not without interest in this

connection. "Regarding extremely low temperatures I express my opinion that below -60 degrees all readings from alcohol thermometers must be viewed with suspicion unless the alcohol is known positively to be pure."

The lieutenant's opinion is founded upon months of experiment and his own thermometers were standard instruments of the United States. He found that pure alcohol with one-fourth water began to solidify at -60.4. He experimented with alcohol, chloroform, brandy, glycerine, ether, nitric acid, spirits of turpentine, all standard U. S. preparations. At a temperature of -59.4 the turpentine commenced to precipitate a solid sediment; the ether to crystallize; chloroform showed small spiculae near the bottom and concentrated English rum became syrup. At -55 alcohol which had been diluted with one-fourth water deposited a sediment of the consistency of lard, while alcohol that was one-fourth water, thickened up through and through. These experiments and many more, carried out upon the shores of the Arctic ocean led Greeley to believe that past reports of temperatures below -60 were more or less to be doubted.

If thermometers are more or less trustworthy what then can be thought of past reports founded upon the freezing of commercial whiskey, commercial coal oil, mercury and Dr. Perry Davis's Pain Killer?

OUTSIDE OPINION.

Mr. H. S. White, correspondent for Renter's news agency, in the *Winnipeg Daily Tribune*: "What surprised me most on getting to Dawson was the perfect order. Fully 75 per cent. of the people there are Americans, and one result of my experience in Dawson has been to raise my opinion of Americans at least 100 per cent. I found them there thoroughly quiet, law-abiding, uncomplaining under often provoking circumstances, and class for class, the most intelligent people that I have met in any country in the world, including my own country."

"So all the stories about scum of the coast cities—"

"Are entirely unfair. As for the question of those who are doing the kicking and complaining, as a matter of fact these were almost exclusively British subjects, and particularly the Australians. The Americans felt that this was not their country, and consequently if they didn't like the regulations they could get out. As for the Australians, they being old miners and used to the most perfect regulations in the world, they were unfortunately made very discontented by the regulations. I say unfortunately, because they are the most desirable men for that country. By far the greater part of the real prospecting that was done there this year was done by Australians."

"How is the royalty collected?"

"I'm not a miner, but I understand that the practice is for the miner to make an affidavit as to the total clean-up. That affidavit is accepted, and he pays 10 per cent. on that amount."

"Do the miners consider the 10 per cent. excessive?"

"Not only the miner, but every man who is in any way interested in the progress of that country, considers the royalty excessive. It is not so much the rate of 10 per cent. as the fact that it is charged on the gross output, and is not a percentage on the net output. Many and many a man there would rather pay 20, 30, or even 40 per cent. on the net output than 10 per cent. on the gross. Why, it is even possible when a man has paid his wages and all other expenses, to have to mortgage his claim in order to raise money to pay his royalty."

"They want either a very much reduced royalty on the gross output or else a royalty on the net output."

"What appeared to you the worst feature in regard to the alleged mismanagement of the gold commissioner's office?"

"Amongst so many things which appear to me to require to be changed, it is hard to say which is the worst. But as I consider that the man who requires most encouragement there is the poor prospector, I should certainly say that anything that acts to his disadvantage is bad, if not the worst. The hardest thing on a poor man looking for a claim is the fact that he has no means of access to the public records, which I understand are open to inspection on payment of a small fee, in every other mining camp in the world. You will understand how this works when I tell you that every inch of the ground on the creeks in both the Klondike and the Indian River mining divisions is staked often two or three times over

and that nevertheless a large number of these claims have not yet been recorded; in other words are still open for staking. If a man could see the records or a plan he could find out where it would be worth his while to go and prospect. At present the information is to my certain knowledge sold privately by the subordinates in the commissioner's office, thus placing the poor man who cannot afford to pay, at a very serious disadvantage. I have referred to this and other similar matters in my letters as the traffic that goes on by way of the side door."

"What do you know about the large fortunes said to be made by officials in the short time the country has been opened?"

"Nothing more than general report. It is well known that many of them are interested in mining and other properties."

"Then it appears that the outlook for the Klondike is not very hopeful?"

"If things had continued as they have been going on last summer, it would have been absolutely hopeless, but happily Mr. Ogilvie and Col. Steele are already there, and there is no doubt that the conditions will be vastly improved and that many of the changes that were most urgently required have already been made. Of course in my opinion it would be advisable in order to satisfy all parties to have a public investigation."

Mr. White while in the north secured a couple of claims, one on Hunker and one on Dominion creek. It is likely that Mr. White will return to the Klondike next spring, not only to again report on matters there but also to represent English capital.

From the *Vancouver World*: Sir Hibbert Tupper in a speech referred briefly to the question of the administration of affairs in the Yukon. Never in the worst days of the Conservative party, or when the worst scandal was developed, had there gone abroad to the Motherland, and the country to the south of us, such tales as those of the administration of the Yukon. We developed Manitoba and the Northwest, he continued, mistakes were no doubt made and for many of these we suffered. But there never came such horrible rumors—call them rumors if you like—as these. I will not discuss the question, but refer to it simply as a reason for activity among Conservatives. We should drive from power men who have been proved to have forfeited all right to power.

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