

A BUSINESS TALK ON THE YUKON*

By F. C. Wade

IT is rather presumptuous on my part to speak of a business talk, because I am not a business man. But in certain kinds of business he who runs may read, and so far as the Yukon is concerned a very primordial business germ is all that is necessary to realize that the Yukon business interests are not being attended to by the Canadian people as they should be.

I suppose you are all familiar with most of the facts with regard to the Yukon and its situation, because of the interest that was awakened in that far-off country in 1897 and 1898; but perhaps it would be well to point out one or two features with regard to its area and extent. To begin with, the Yukon is situated on our west coast, locking arms with Alaska—in fact, there is a little too much locking arms on the part of Alaska at the present time. That long arm that goes down on the western coast, seems to get longer all the time, so that it is difficult to tell which is our own country and which is the Alaskan arm with which we are encircled from time to time.

In the fact that Alaska at the north was purchased by the United States Government from the Russians, we have the first error or misfortune made with regard to the Yukon, and one of the most unfortunate things that ever occurred so far as the development of the north-western part of Canada is concerned. It was bad enough to have an immense hostile country below the 49th parallel, and all along our south. It was worse to allow that country to become possessed on the north of a large district which must ever remain hostile to us. We see the difficulties of it every day—customs difficulties, the trouble in delimiting our boundary, the tearing down of the British flag at Skagway, and other matters which might at any time lead to international complications.

The Klondyke, which is a portion of the Yukon, is situated in about sixty-four degrees north latitude; in fact, Circle City, a little below the Yukon, was so called because it was supposed to be within the Arctic Circle; it was afterwards found out not to be within the Arctic Circle, but it was sufficiently far north to justify the name. The Yukon country itself is 198,000 square miles in extent, which is considerably more than the area of Quebec, and very considerably more than the area of Ontario—twice the area of Ontario as it used to be given in the geographies.

The Klondyke mining camp, of the trade of which I have to speak, is a circumscribed area, bounded on the south by the Indian River, on the north by the Klondyke River, on the west by the Rocky Mountains, and on the east by the Yukon. It is some 800 square miles in extent.

The mileage of creeks actually operated in the Yukon does not go over fifty miles. Professor McConnell, Mr. Meyers, and others who have visited the country agree that there is no reason for imagining that the gold area will not extend to almost all the creeks in the Yukon, and when I tell you that only fifty miles have been worked, and that there are seven thousand miles of creeks in the Yukon, almost all of which are unprospected, you can have some idea of the future which lies before that country. (Hear, hear.) As to the little area of the Klondyke, with which we have to deal, I would like to make it clear to you that it has only been actively developed during the last four or five years.

The first stake was driven by George Cormack on Discovery Claim at Bonanza, on August 16th, 1896. The stampede into the country commenced in 1897, and continued in 1898. The first large gold production was made

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