THE GOLD COMMISSIONER EXPOSED.

Friends of His Offfce Secure the "Plums."

The Opening of Dominion Creek Shows a Most Rotten Condition of Affairs and Only Those on the Inside Got Anything.

The lengthy report of the citizens' committee to the mass meeting on Tuesday evening was in the nature of a sensation. Gold Commissioner, Thomas Fawcett, had been shown by the local paper in a very bad light, as will be seen in the reprinted article in a late issue. An indignation meeting of miners had appointed a committee to investigate the gold commissioner and they had put to him some very sharp but pertinent questions. His replies to those questions were given out in the meeting and were accepted as gospel. Major Walsh had been shown to the world by Thomas Fawcett, Esq., to have not only deliberately prevaricated, but to have, with cunning duplicity used his subordinate for a shield for his own iniquities and shortcomings.

The crowd had laughed merrily when the gold commissioner deliberately accused the Major of sending a lady to him with an order for a "permit to prospect forbidden ground." What a revelation to know that the Major and his council "were in the habit of signing the poor gold commissioner's name" whenever it suited them to cover their own tracks. What an abuse of a poor, overworked recorder had been perpetrated by his superiors! Over and over again to the questions, "Who has done this?" or "Who did that?" Mr. Fawcett had replied, "Major Walsh! Major Walsh!"

"Poor Tom Fawcett" was in everyone's mouth, and, as the extent of his woes became more and more apparent, a strong wave of sympathy passed over the meeting and took in even the NUGGET. If what the gold commissioner said of Walsh were true then was the Major trampling upon an inferior in an unheard of fashion. Documents had been signed without his knowledge or consent and foisted upon the public as the doings of Thomas Fawcett.

Changes in dates had been made deliberately and charged to Thomas Fawcett. The Major had pursued a vacillating course and deliberately allowed the odium to fall upon his inferior, who stated to the committee that he was merely as one of his clerks—no more and no less. A lady friend of the Major had pursued the hapless gold commissioner, and with Major Walsh's diabolical orders in her hand had bidden him step aside from the paths of rectitude and issue a permit to prospect ground he was holding closed against 20,000 eager, struggling applicants, and which was widely known as "forbidden ground."

The poor, disgraced gold commissioner was impelled by his sworn respect for the orders of his superiors to issue that positively illegal permit. That is all; he wouldn't dare say "no" when his superior said "YES."

"Woe! woe!! woe!! is me, when designing men encompass me round about."

Documents of destruction had been designed in darkness and put forth as his. He had not even been used as a puppet—for a puppet takes part in its own helpless pantomime. No, he was not even the catspaw used by the monkey to draw roasted chestnuts from the fire.

Such was the substance of Mr. Fawcett's answer to the citizens' committee. The veracity of the committee is undoubted and unshaken. Most of the questions had been carefully written out and the answers just as carefully taken down. That the gold commissioner would deliberately prevaricate on matters which could so easily be verified or proven false, was the last thing anyone thought of. Therefore, the mass meeting of 3000 people swallowed Mr. Fawcett's vindication of himself as readily as a gourmand could swallow an Eastern oyster. "What do you thiuk of Major Walsh now?" was asked a thousand times of the NUGGET representative.

The NUGGET had nothing to say, but, early Wednesday morning, a representative found his way to the headquarters building armed with as formidable a pile of papers as ever disconcerted a government official. Some leading questions were in the NUGGET pocketbook and some sharp retaliations for misinformation taking shape. Mr. Fawcett refused to meet the NUGGET man in Major Walsh's presence—or anywhere else for that matter. The next best thing was to fire some questions at the Yukon commissioner.

"Is it a fact that you or the council sign Mr. Fawcett's name whenever you so desire?"

"No!"

"Have you yourself signed his name?"

"No!!!"

"Has Mr. Fawcett's name ever been signed to documents without his knowledge and consent or against his expressed wishes?"

"No!!!"

"Then how do you account for Mr. Fawcett's reply to the following question put to him by the citizen's committee: 'Why did you issue a mandate saying permits would be issued on July 11 to persons desirous of prospecting bench claims?' Mr. Fawcett's answer was: 'The notice was framed by the council without my being consulted and I had nothing to do with it. It was signed by the council.'"

The major was astounded. He assured the NUGGET that Mr. Fawcett must have been misquoted. He explained that when in council any matters decided upon were signed by his own private secretary who was also secretary of the council whether the signature was his own, Mr. Fawcett's or Mr. Wade's. The major made an unsuccessful attempt to get Mr. Fawcett to come and substantiate his words, but the gold commissioner was too wise to face the scribe.

The next question was a pointed one, "Major, regarding the last proclamation Mr. Fawcett says: 'Major Walsh also had this proclamation printed and posted upon the 9th,' and gives the committee the idea that his own hands were clean."

The major was using great self restraint but was evidently warm. Another attempt was made to get Mr. Fawcett upstairs but it was equally unsuccessful. Major Walsh stated that the gold commissioner was the advocate of the measure, drafted the document, and either handed it to the printer himself or saw it handed as could be proved by witnesses. As for the date being two days back instead of two days ahead he (the major) was absolutely in the dark. He desired the day of opening to be on the eleventh.

"Major, the following question was put to Mr. Fawcett with the following answer: 'Did you not issue one or more permits to prospect forbidden ground; and to whom?' The gold commissioner's answer was: 'I have only issued one permit and that was to a lady . . . and I issued it by order of Major Walsh.'"

The major was now clearly angry. He declared emphatically that he had never sent anyone to Fawcett for a permit and at this point he took up the scribe's papers which contained the questions and answers of the committee and Mr. Fawcett, and disappeared into the lower offices. An interval of some twenty minutes and the papers were brought back by the Yukon Commissioner; but what a change in the papers. Fawcett had denied his damaging admissions to the committee and in support of his retraction had scratched out all that was to the point and had added in his own handwriting what must condemn him eternally in the mind of all honest men. The childish minded recorder insists that the citizens' committee misunderstood him for he now admits himself to be one of the council which drew up the disclaimed proclamations. The fickle headed gold commissioner takes back his statement of his utter innocence of the second proclamation and says in his own hand-writing "And at the major's suggestion I framed the second notice, etc., etc." This changeable incompetent of a gold commissioner, in his own peculiar hieroglyphics, hastens to condemn the committee's veracity and assure the world that he never said the major sent him an order to issue a permit before the date set by the council. Was ever such a jumping jack of a turncoat in office before? Did such a rattle brain official ever have such a chance to vex men's souls? That he asserted to the committee that he did so by the major's orders no one on earth doubts who knows the committee. Yet upon being confronted by his perjury he cannot retract too quick. Like the Irishman's flea, when you put your finger on him he is not there. Nail him to a statemet and you find him slipping out of his garments and escaping. Prevarication is followed by retraction and we suppose the retraction will be followed by more prevarication: Has he no respect for truth at all? What object could he have in deliberately falsifying to the committee on a matter which anyone can verify in ten minutes?

Did Mrs. Emma Koch go to Mr. Fawcett with an order for a permit from Major Walsh? or even did she go from Major Walsh's office to Fawcett's as though backed officially in her request for one? On this issue the NUGGET will take its stand. Here is a copy of the permit issued on June 27th, when Dominion creek was believed by all honest men, who believed in the gold commissioners integrity, to be closed to friends and foes alike:

MINING DIVISION OF DEPARTEMENT OF THE INTERIOR, YUKON. } *Mining Recorder's Office.*

June 28, 1898.

DISTRICT CANADA:

Permission is hereby granted to Mrs. E. Koch to locate or stake a claim on any unstaked and unoccupied ground on the hillsides, on closed portions of Dominion creek.

THOS. FAWCETT,
Gold Commissioner.

[SEAL.]

What does this cameleopard-hued official say now? Simply this, "I issued under instructions *purporting* to come from Major Walsh."

This travesty on manhood simply says that the lady lied—not he. Let us see about that. Mrs. Koch is a highly respectable lady of well-known antecedents, industrious and above reproach, as all agree who know her. Her story is supported in every detail by Dr. Arabella Merrill, who bears letters of endorsement which stamp her a perfect lady and a Christian woman. Her mission in the North West is that of a missionary nurse—a calling she has followed for years.

Mrs. Koch kept a restaurant on Main street before the present overdone rush. A miner told her of some good ground off Dominion but she must get a permit in order to get it. Mrs. Koch is a German lady and knows as little of mines or mining laws as Fawcett himself. In her innocence of heart she presented herself at the recorder's office and asked for a permit. The recorder, in his lofty superiority, knowing that the creek was closed, replied that a permit was unnecessary.

The lady thought the news was too good to be true but, nevertheless, went home with the matter still on her mind. She decided that a forty-mile tramp through the woods was not to be thought of unless she was sure about the permit so she persuaded her friend, Dr. Merrill to go and ask Major Walsh. She felt sure that the Major would not willfully send her on a wild goose chase. To the doctor's inquiry about the permit the major said: "Why, yes, certainly; the creek is closed and cannot be prospected or staked without a permit." Mrs. Koch was told and went for the permit. It was handed out to her. The ladies will take oath before their God to the above facts. Mrs. Koch had not seen the major and did not mention him.

Is anything more necessary to prove the utter unreliability of the man calling himself gold commissioner? Have we got to pile proof on proof forever before he will have the decency to step down and out? We feel that if this thing goes on we shall get warm after a while and say something.

FAWCETT EXONERATES HIMSELF.

His Answers to the Committee Show Him to Be a Very Ill-used Individual.

The mass-meeting which was called on Tuesday evening to hear the report of the two committees appointed at a former mass-meeting to wait upon the gold commissioner, was a success in every particular. Mr. J. Knight Smith, who was chairman of both committees, presided at the meeting. Mr. Geo. C. Armstrong reported for the committee which was to wait upon Mr. Fawcett and get the clerical force and the office itself extended so that the business of the miners could be despatched without the exasperating delays of the past.

Mr. Armstrong reported that the committee had met Mr. Fawcett by appointment one evening and he stated that he was powerless to remedy the evils complained of. Last winter he had been compelled to reduce his clerical force because the stores would not guarantee to feed them all winter. He had no anticipation at the time of the number of "stampeders" which afterwards took place, nor of the amount of work it would throw upon his office.

The committee replied by letter setting forth the inadequacy of the gold commissioner's force and the delays in every department, and urging that the proper representative at Ottawa be at once communicated with. Mr. Fawcett replied by letter that he had received the intelligence from Ottawa that "a party of 12 persons had been appointed to assist in his office," and the reason they were not already here was probably due to their coming in over the Stickeen route. Mr. Armstrong made a few apt remarks on the report and sat down amid applause.

Mr. Frank Dunleavey, for the committee appointed to investigate the Dominion stampede, made a most interesting and valuable report, amid much applause and laughter. The committee had written Mr. Fawcett and he met them by appointment. The gold commissioner had met them cordially and frankly and answered all questions freely. He was evidently much worked up over the intangible charges of corruption floating in the air, from Forty-mile to Bennett, and had once last winter cleaned his office out entirely of its clerks and called for specific charges from the public. None were made.

The following questions were put and answered:

"Why were the Dominion bench claims closed to the public in the first place?"

He "didn't know." (Much laughter.)

"Why did you issue a mandate saying permits would be issued on July 11th to persons desirous of prospecting bench claims?"

"The notice was framed by the council without my being consulted and signed by one of that council." (Laughter.)

"Why was that mandate revoked on July 7th, and another issued on the 8th saying 'Hill and bench claims are now open to free miners;' and do you know how some of the public received information before the posting of that proclamation?"

"I thought permits unnecessary and illegal as a miner's right was the only permit required. On my suggestion the second notice was framed on the 8th of July; but I understood it was not to be published until the 11th. Major Walsh had them printed and posted up on the 9th. People went out prior to the 8th and staked with the dates 11th, 12th and 13th; but whether or not they got their information from this office I have no means of knowing. I am only one of the council." (Cries of "Oh! Oh!")

"When did your supreme power as gold commissioner, with regard to mining matters, cease; and who is now responsible for the edicts issued from the gold commissioner's office and signed by you?"

"On the arrival of Major Walsh I had no absolute power as gold commissioner, except in mining disputes, and even that power was conferred on me by Major Walsh." (Much laughter).

The next question was a pertinent one and was productive of howls of derision and delight:

"Did you not issue one or more permits to prospect forbidden ground, and to whom?"

"I have issued only one permit and that was to a lady (yells of laughter) prior to the first proclamation being thought of."

"Did you do this by anyone's direction!"

"By order of Major Walsh." (Much laughter and applause.)

"Did anyone go out to Dominion creek previous to July 9th to stake by your advice?"

"No! Two men went out to *survey*, but not to stake." (Cries of derision)

Mr. Fawcett further stated that he had requested Major Walsh to appoint Judge McGuire to investigate the charges which had been brought against him; but that Major Walsh said "he had not the power to do so—that the matter better go to Ottawa." Mr. Fawcett further stated that if he had had his own way about the Dominion benches there would have been no "Dominion muddle."

Mr. Dunleavy continued his report and said that Mr. Fawcett claimed it was a usual thing for the council to pass orders and sign his name. (Much laughter) He (Fawcett) had been given to understand by the members of the council that the proclamation opening Dominion creek without permits was not to be made public until the eleventh. To the question as to who had changed this order Mr. Fawcett replied

"Major Walsh." (laughter)

"Who is responsible for edicts now emanating from your office?"

"Major Walsh." (loud and prolonged laughter)

Mr. Fawcett claimed that the sole cause of the "Dominion muddle" was this interference in affairs of the office by higher officials.

In his remarks upon the report he had just made Mr. Dunleavy said that in regard to the first question as to why the creek had been closed in the first place Mr. Fawcett's answer of "I don't know" was most unsatisfactory because he ought to have known. Major Walsh was not here at that time to interpose his authority.

In regard to Mr. Fawcett's plea that he was not even responsible for his own signature Mr. Dunleavey said: I know what I would say if anyone signed my name without my knowledge or approval as Fawcett says was done with his. I would say, 'Forgery!' but I suppose in this case it is only 'Proclamation!' The cause of the trouble appears to me to lie in 'one man government.' What do you think of the abuse of official power which will select one person for favors in the form of a permit and debar the other twenty thousand? The opinion of the community has been that the gold commissioner has been mostly if not wholly to blame in this Dominion scandal and other matters. Fawcett puts it where it belongs. I think Mr. Walsh is advised by incompetent advisers. What do Capt. Bliss and Inspector McGregor know about a pick and shovel? If Mr. Fawcett is to be believed you have no mining laws: Major Walsh can set him and them aside with impunity. If as the gold commissioner says the Major is the supreme head of that office as well as the others he must accept supreme responsibility. The gold commissioner thinks he is a much abused man. So would I if anyone signed my name without my sanction and approval."

Mr. Dunleavey was much applauded throughout and the meeting seemed to think the gold commissioner had made out a very good case for himself throwing the responsibility on Major Walsh, who, according to the committee's report, was said by Mr. Fawcett to be quite in the habit of having proclamations drawn up and signed without even the gold commissioner's sanction to what purported to be his own signature.

A Mr. Cox next spoke making some very humorous allusions to present affairs. His dry way of telling his own troubles convulsed the audience. Some weeks ago he had gone out and staked a 500-ft. claim. A friend was taken out to stake; but when he went in to record the gold commissioner marked 1 is certificate with but 250 feet. The friend persuaded Cox to go to Major and speak for him. The major received him affably and heard him through and finally asked him to show him his own certificate. Taking the certificate the major sent it down to Fawcett with a note. When it came back it also was marked "250 feet." [loud and continued laughter.] "Whatever you do whenever you have a grievance go and see the major; he is a perfect gentleman—but don't give him your certificate." [loud laughter.]

C. M. Woodworth made the next speech and a good solid speech too. He had been pleading law for the past three weeks and had never yet had to plead the law of Major Walsh. Men were running away with a very foolish thing when they run away with the idea that Major Walsh or any other man was the only law of the district. Everybody had the same rights before the law as Major Walsh himself. Mr. Woodworth spoke very lucidly under the heads "Common law," "Canadian law," "Dominion law," and lastly "Territorial law," upon all of which, with a reasonable interpretation, you could stand and defy any man to change it at his will. The mining regulations probably come under the last head, but even they, if studied, were found to be equal and fair and beyond the power of any man to add to at his will. He was a Canadian and proud of it, but for some time past had felt much humiliated at what he had found to be the belief of most people present that we were wholly at the mercy of some one or other of the officials here. As illustrative of this he quoted the case of his first client before Judge McGuire. As soon as the client heard that Crown Prosecuting Attorney Wade was against them he cried out: "Then for God's sake we are lost!"

"But we were not lost and I say to you that you have a poor appreciation of yourselves or your rights or the laws made for you when you cry 'We are lost' because some official is arraigned against you."

"Foreigners also have equal rights with Canadians under the law. All are free and equal under our laws and I want to say that no freer field for you exists than under our flag."

"Beware how you trade off Fawcett for some one you don't know. No one here had ever had

[Continued on 2nd Page.]

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