The Klondike Nugget

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SATURDAY, JULY 23, 1898

MR. FAWCETT'S GRIEVANCE.

Mr. Fawcett, the gold commissioner, has a grievance against the NUGGET. His feelings have been seriously injured by reason of an article which appeared recently in these columns concerning a claim recorded by Mr. Chas. K. Zorn and afterwards recorded, through an official error, by Andrew Nelson. The article stated that the claim in question is located on Sulphur creek, and Mr. Fawcett, after a diligent search of the records finds that no such dispute occurred on the Sulphur claim, and hence he "desires to call the attention of the miners to the quality of the 'facts' dished out to them by the NUGGET."

After a careful investigation of the matter, this paper, having always desired to be fair in its dealings, is ready to acknowledge that Mr. Fawcett is correct in denying the story, at least, as far as *Sulphur* creek is concerned.

Through one of those peculiar errors that the best regulated of newspapers is liable to fall into, the article referred to located the claim on No. 3, Sulphur, when it should have read *No. 11a, All*. With the single exception, the NUGGET still maintains that the story is absolutely true, *i. e.*, Mr. Zorn recorded the claim, Mr. Nelson also recorded the same claim, both were given papers and the matter was finally settled by Mr. Fawcett restoring Nelson's right and Mr. Zorn repaying Nelson his recording fee of $15—because Mr. Fawcett refused to do so.

NO APOLOGY.

THE NUGGET has no apology to offer for the stand it has taken in regard to the gold commissioner and the methods that have been pursued in conducting the affairs of his office. We are not in the newspaper business for sensational purposes, nor for the sake of gaining the support of one class of people as against any other. Nor would we, under any consideration, have assumed our present attitude had the complaints against the gold commissioner and his office, come from a few isolated cases or from "discontented Americans," as friends of Mr. Fawcett have hinted.

The fact of the matter is that the present agitation, both against the commissioner and existing laws, is the result of a feeling so widely spread and so deeply rooted, that we feel absolutely safe in making the statement, that the sentiments expressed in the columns of this paper voice the convictions of nine out of every ten men in the Klondike mining district. Moreover, of all the men who have spoken in condemnation of existing conditions, none have taken as bold a stand or been so bitter in their denunciations as the subjects of Great Britain.

THE NUGGET has been particularly careful in this matter. In throwing our columns open for the expression of public opinion, we have sought men, whose knowledge of law and whose experience in other mining camps makes their statements authoritative, and in nearly every instance these men have been citizens either of England or her provinces. It cannot, therefore, be truthfully maintained that Americans or any other particular class of men have combined for an attack upon the gold commissioner or the unjust regulations now in force here. All lines of nationality have been entirely blotted out; the petty jealousies that are wont to exist between citizens of different nations have been laid aside and, led by Canadians and other British subjects, a united body of 10,000 men stands waiting for the redress that must come before this country can be successfully developed.

We repeat, the NUGGET has no apology to offer for its present course of action.

ONCE MORE WE SUGGEST.

The remark is often made to us by gentlemen in official positions that "it must be an easy snap to sit back in the editorial sanctum and criticise the powers that be." The NUGGET knows better. In order to criticise anything or anyone intelligently one must be quite sure of their facts. Now, facts are nearly as hard to get a hold of in Dawson as gold mines. The biggest part of the population of this city are perfect strangers to one another. By the time they begin to get familiar with their surroundings and the people about them the most of them leave for down river. Then there is an unwritten code which binds together the employes and officers of the government in a sphinx-like silence. These conditions tend to make Dawson what she is to-day—the hardest city of its size in the world in which to verify the usual reports of a large city. Then, again, to intelligently criticise one must be able to suggest a new or a better way. This necessitates that the newspaper man be a man of wide experience or else he must quite often present the absurd spectacle of a tenderfoot giving an exhibition ride to an audience of cow-punchers. That most of the NUGGET's criticisms and suggestions well deserve the attention they receive is demonstrated by the fact that quite often a few days sees them carried out and proving very quickly to be a vast improvement on past conditions. There is one suggestion, however, which we have made repeatedly and which has apparently so far failed in its object, and yet if those in authority would but comply there would be in Dawson—yes, in the entire Yukon district—the heartiest shaking of hands and self-congratulations that has ever been seen here, and that is simply to substitute a competent clerk for the gold commissioner now in office.

A CASE FOR AN APPEAL.

There are times when some kinds of men have to be restrained by force. In the majority of cases they can be restrained by threats. The great mass of men, however, need but little restraint; their own sense of justice will cause them to respect the rights of others. Sometimes from lack of thought they will unwittingly cause a great injury to their fellow man, but they have only to be apprised of the results of their acts to map out a new course for themselves for the future. Take a case in point. Here are thousands of miners' cabins strung along the creeks and creek beds over a territory of scores of square miles. For the most part the creeks are covered with timber or brush. Careless campers have started at least a thousand fires in the last few days of dry heat and whole creeks are now involved. Mr. J. Knight Smith has returned from Bear creek and assures us that on one day this week five cabins were totally destroyed with all their contents. Most of the owners had packed out their next winter's supply and were in town on business at the time of the fire. In several cases Mr. Smith and others were just in time to prevent more loss.

The NUGGET believes itself to be in perfect touch with the great majority of the inhabitants of this region and feels absolutely certain all that is necessary to make men as careful of leaving their campfires as watched by a squad of police is to point out to them the injury they may work by one moment of forgetfulness. While we might all ask "Am I my brother's keeper?" yet as men among men it behoves us to use the utmost care that we injure not our fellow.

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EXONERATES HIMSELF.

[*Continued from 3d Page.*]

even a suspicion of his standing with his hand outstretched behind him for fees. I believe him to be an honest man. His manners may not be all that we could desire, but give me my rights in preference every time to polished manners." (Much applause.)

The speaker concluded with the free legal advice to "go home and read your regulations and laws and then get your rights, and don't pay so much attention to edicts commencing 'By the powers invested in me.'" (Loud and prolonged applause.)

Dr. McDougal proposed the following resolution which was afterwards carried unanimously with enthusiasm.

Resolved, That a miner's committee of 11 with power to add to to its number, be appointed at this meeting to take whatever action may from time to time be necessary to express the public opinion of the district to the administration; to redress, if possible, public wrongs and in other ways further the interests of the miners; and that this committee be answerable to mass meetings of the miners to be called from time to time.

In speaking on the resolution Mr. McDougal said he anticipated this committee would become in the end similar in powers and influence to the Miners Institute of other places and would act in the capacity of "A miner's watch dog."

"If we had had such a committee last winter there would not be such a state of things at the recorder's office as did exist. Confidence had been shaken by charges and counter charges, but we do not wish to take up the past but to remedy present ills. With such a committee in existence no one man would be able to go out and stake 10, 20 and even 40 claims and sell for half interests, as was said to have been done last winter. (Cheers.)

Mr. Armstrong next spoke, interrupted by much enthusiastic cheering. His reference to last winter when "those with money could obtain information withheld from others was accepted as a true reflection of facts. "Walsh says the district must be made to pay expenses, but the miners are being made to pay it all. The fact of the matter is in this district, the government has a big baby on its hands and doesn't know how to manage it—(much laughter) and the men she has sent here to look after it know still less." (Prolonged cheering.)

He asked for more information on the water front matter. He wanted to know if it was a fact that the Crown's Land Agent had given that public ground, by leasing it, to a party at $1 per foot, who was very kindly not required to pay a cent until the ground was already re-leased and occupied. (Sensation). Water fronts always belonged to the people and never were more needed by them than here where boats were from three to twelve deep. Yet if the government must use 4% to raise revenue, why did it not get the whole $10 per foot it was renting for?

With a few more remarks on bad trails, unjust taxation, and on the remarkable law and order in Dawson, maintained by just a handful of police, and the unnecessary imposition of more taxes to support a body of militia being now sent in, the speaker sat down amid much applause.

W. W. Wingard, an American, wanted to know by whose authority he and his fellow-tenters on the beach were being ordered every day to "move on." He also had a grievance in not being allowed to cut wood when nothing else offered.

The chair suggested that as many old miners as possible be appointed on the committee and the following names were suggested and added: Chas. J. Hickey, Geo. Armstrong, Dr. McDougal, Col. McGregor, E. Leroy Pelletier, A. M. McQuen, Dan Frazier, John Cameron, J. Knight Smith, Mr. Galvin and Mr. Burke.

The meeting now adjourned feeling that the evening had been well spent, and feeling also that Mr. Thomas Fawcett had well demonstrated to the committee, by his statements, his own utter innocence in the Dominion muddle. Mr. Fawcett had put everything onto Mr. Walsh's shoulders, and the latter gentleman now stood before the public in a very unfavorable light. In the interview next morning, the NUGGET secured some "side lights," which we deal with in another article.

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