

GOV. ROSS INTERVIEWED

States His Views As to Needs of the Yukon to Victoria Times—Opposed to Present Royalty System—Believes Dawson the Proper Place for Assay Office.

If the views of Governor J. H. Ross, of the Yukon Territory, are to prevail at Ottawa, the present season will be the last upon which the royalty upon gold will be collected in the Klondike. In the opinion of the chief executive officer of the best of Canada's placer gold producing fields, the imposition of an export duty on the precious metal which is extracted from the creek beds and the hillsides of the Klondike would be far more effective, and an altogether more rational system of revenue than the present one. A recommendation to that effect has already gone forward from the governor to the government at Ottawa, and although it is unlikely that any change will be made in the methods of raising revenue in the north this year, his advice will certainly have great weight with the administration in formulating their policy with regard to the Yukon next season.

The advantages of this system were explained by Governor Ross this morning in conversation with a representative of the Times. Under the royalty system there is a great leakage of revenue, due to the natural desire of the miner to avoid the payment of tax which is always more or less irksome. Under an export duty little loss need result, for the royalty for confiscation would probably be attached to the finding of gold crossing the boundary line upon which the export tax had not been paid, and no company or individual miner would risk the loss of the entire purse for the sake of the trifle in the way of duty. The new system would apply to corporations and banks as well as miners. The customs officers at the boundary line would weigh the gold there and exact the necessary duty before allowing the gold to proceed.

This would apply to all gold going out of the territory and would thus apply to Canadian miners from other provinces as well as to those from south of the 49th parallel. Discrimination might be shown, however, by pro-

viding for a rebate on gold sold in Canadian cities, just as a rebate on the royalty is now given in the cities of Victoria and Vancouver.

The governor, who as mentioned yesterday intends to remain in Victoria until the 4th, and then return to his labors on the steamer Hasting, expresses himself as highly pleased with the conditions obtaining in Dawson and the general character of the camp and the outlook for its future. "It is one of the most law-abiding places on the face of the earth," he said this morning, "and will compare favorably with any city in Canada or the United States in that respect."

The exodus to Nome, upon which so much has been said, was only of minimum importance in his opinion. It did not deplete the camp of its better citizens, but it drew to the mouth of the river the more undesirable class represented in the gamblers, sure-thing men, and similar characters, whose presence, while swelling the population, was of doubtful benefit to the camp.

Regarding the permanence of the district as a gold producer he has no misgivings or doubts. Only the fringe of the gold belt he believes has been touched, and he thinks that thousands of acres of gold-bearing territory remains still to be exploited by the adventurous argonaut. "Of course, old methods are becoming obsolete," he remarked, "and the mining of the future will be on a scale considerably in advance of that represented in the pick and shovel era. But, on the other hand, the business of gold mining is now on a strictly commercial basis, and the investor can now go into the camp, plot out his ground and make a reasonably accurate estimate of the amount of gold which he can take from it. The element of chance has been eliminated from the calculation."

The question of fuel is, of course, one which just now is a most serious problem for the miner. The problem has not yet reached the acute stage, for there is still sufficient wood in the country to meet all demands made upon it, and the situation will be further relieved by the removal of the reserve, which the governor intends to make upon his return, from several thousand acres on the Klondike river. This belt of timber land was reserved originally for mining purposes, and the time seems ripe for throwing it open. It extends for eight or ten miles along the banks of the Klondike river, and the belt probably averages about a mile in width. Some of it will be suitable for milling purposes, and the remainder will be available for the miner. It is only a question of time when the lumber necessary for the Klondike will have to be brought in from the coast. The coast lumber is infinitely superior to the local product, but the freight rates are an obstacle which at present prevents the advent of the output of the coast mills. The introduction of oil as fuel for the locomotives and steamers of the White Pass & Yukon Railway company, Governor Ross thinks, may presage the ultimate adoption of that fuel for use on the machinery of the creeks. It is estimated that one ton of oil is equal to four cords of wood, and with proper tanks on the cars and steamers the handling of the commodity would be much handier than coal. Its comparative cheapness would be another element in its favor. At present electricity is being employed by many of the companies which are close enough to the city of Dawson to utilize that source of power. Electric shovels and ploughs are operated on the hillsides, where miners now turn over nearly all the earth on their claims, stripping the paystreak and then taking it out ahead of them. The gopher workings are becoming a thing of the past. However, as he came up on the river he saw immense piles of cordwood along the banks which indicated that the miners of the Yukon need not worry over the sources of their fuel supply.

There is a more immediate problem before the miner, and that is the failure of the water supply. When the country was wooded, and its surface clothed in moss, the latter sucked up the moisture and retained it like a sponge, from which the water passed away gradually keeping the creeks at a normal stage all of the time. The depletion of the woods, and the fires which have burned the moss off the surface of the rocks permitted an unobstructed flow of water, flooded creeks, and ultimately dry creek beds. The result is seen this summer, when many of the best properties have been obliged

to shut down owing to the drought. It is intended to overcome this, the governor states, by building reservoirs, into which the water used in sluicing will run, and from which it will be pumped back to be re-used when the flow in the stream falls away.

Regarding his work in the North, Mr. Ross states that he found that the preparatory course which he underwent as a member of the executive in the Northwest territories was of the greatest use to him and that the conditions and problems with which he was surrounded and confronted were very similar to those which he had to meet when connected with the Regina administration. Everything has moved along smoothly, and his reception and treatment by the people of Dawson has been of the kindest character.

He does not disguise his opinion that Dawson City is the proper place for an assay office, and expressed his gratification at the stand taken by the newspapers of Victoria in favor of the same place. The views of the first government officer in the Klondike on the whole subject of the handling, assaying and sale of gold, from a departmental standpoint, have doubtless been already communicated to the Dominion government.

The governor's work in Dawson is being carried on as far as possible by his deputies, but there are many matters which necessitate his personal presence, and it is for this reason that he is endeavoring to adjust his private business in order to get back to his post early next month.—Victoria Times, Aug. 30.

GOLD RUN HOTEL

A Surprise to Flushers on Dominion—The World Do Move.

C. D. Fowle, who formerly was one of the officers in the A. C. Co.'s store in Dawson is now located out at the mouth of Caribou on Dominion. He has thrown down his pen and assumed the control of the Gold Run hotel, which popular hostelry has taken the shine out of all competitors on the creek. The house is built with separate rooms for guests and there the weary traveler can revel in unexpected luxury for the table is excellent and the rooms fitted with spring mattresses and other chechako frills and furnishings. A first-class bar is an adjunct to the house and its extensive patronage denotes the excellence of the viands dispensed.

BACK FROM KOYUKUK

Dan Anderson Returns After a Short Visit.

Mr. Dan Anderson, a well known Dawsonite, returned yesterday on the steamer May West from the Koyukuk where he has spent the largest part of the summer.

The former reports which have been brought to Dawson concerning that country are fully substantiated by Mr. Anderson, who has personally investigated the creeks and from the prospects found and the general formation of the country he considers it to be of great mineral resources.

He left two men to go on a prospecting trip for him up to the head of the John river, which he considers as a likely place for a good strike, as the country is of the same formation as Slate creek where the pay has thus far been discovered.

Mr. Anderson brought with him several nuggets as samples of the products of the country. The gold is very fine and assays over \$19 to the ounce and passes in exchange at the stores at \$17.

Mr. Anderson intends returning as soon as he can complete his business affairs in Dawson.

Territorial Court.

Several cases were disposed of yesterday in the territorial court. Mr. Justice Dugas rendered his decision in the case of Wingstad vs. Quartz Creek Concession. The motion of the plaintiff for an interim injunction was dismissed with costs, the court finding the claim in question to be the property of the defendant company.

In Wilcoxon vs. McDonald the case was dismissed with costs.

In the case of Miller vs. Trabold et al., the action arising over the disputed ownership of the Duer claim, a well known property lying on Monte Cristo hill, the evidence as to the slope of the hill, watersheds, etc., was so largely a matter of expert testimony that his lordship decided to view the ground personally. In the afternoon a special stage conveyed the litigants, the court, clerk of the court, stenographer, four barristers and four Dominion land surveyors to the claim where an exhaustive examination was made of its topography and other questions at issue.

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AFTER LONG AND HARD TRIP

H. W. Bracken Returns From Unprospected Country

Fully 1000 Miles North From Dawson—A Herd of Mountain Sheep Frozen in Glacier.

H. W. Bracken has just closed one of the greatest prospecting tours ever recorded in Alaska. As soon as the river opened and let the first scows down the river last spring he took with him six men and sixteen horses with a season's stock of provisions and started with his scow down the river to a point near Ft. Yukon where he cut a trail of hundreds of miles, the horses packing all the necessities of a camping or prospecting trip for the men. A vast virgin country unknown to white men heretofore was traversed.

Mr. Bracken is a scientific mining man who has followed that calling over 25 years—one whose several mining inventions has made him famous all over the mining world. This practical experience in all grades of rock and mineral bearing gravel enables him to invariably tell the approximate value of all grades of mineral on sight. In this trip they traveled over many creeks, flats, rivers and mountains and halted only after crossing miles of glaciers in the river bed and ascended through the gorge of the Romanoff mountains. They had got out of the timber belt and had packed wood three days on the horses for fuel; and as no more grass could be found for the horses they were obliged to retreat.

Mr. Bracken ascended a mountain of glacier, about five miles to the summit, but was met with the severest snow storm he experienced in three years in Alaska. He was above the clouds and on an altitude of about 13,000 feet above sea level, and about 70 deg. latitude north. The next morning Mr. Bracken with his trail man ascended the glaciers. They found it clear and the sun shining. No timber or cooking nor grass for horses could be found. All rivers ran north to the Arctic ocean. They found on their return down the mountain glacier where great herds of mountain sheep, which went in drives of probably hundreds or thousands, frozen in the ice. It was thought some extreme mid-winter blizzard had caught them while stampeding over the dome, when they huddled together and froze up; then water flowed in and all froze up solid. Whatever portion of their bodies were thawed or above the ice were devoured by arctic bears and wolves. Feet, heads and horns and bleached bones stuck out of the great glacier like a field of stubs, the arctic beasts not caring to eat any more than that exposed above the ice. Men and horses could not survive without food to cook and grass for horses. This unexpected condition of impossibilities to surmount blighted Mr. Bracken's expectations and they were forced to "about face" and save all supplies to get back as they were at this point about 1000 miles from Dawson. A heavy fall of snow, lasting three days, and covering the ground six inches deep on the last of July caused much hardship on the start home.

Some of the party went to Rampart, some to Circle City and Mr. Bracken and his two cooks returned to Dawson. The three argonauts feel their disappointment keenly, but are magnanimous enough not to complain. It is only a repetition of thousands of cases not only in the Klondike, but the world over; where men went fishing and got no fish, hunting and got no game, prospecting and got no gold or valuable minerals; and if they have added one more disappointment to the great majority of ventures in life, they have displayed an energetic spirit which may yet win.

Mr. Bracken has gathered some remarkable specimens of rock, some of which no mining eyes or mineralogist ever saw before. One sample looks as if a piece of corduroy cloth had congealed into hard quartz. Several samples, he says, is unknown to any mining bureau. Mr. Schrader of the U. S. government geological survey, last spring interviewed and noted Mr. Bracken's explorations three years ago on the Koyukuk river, which was about 1000 miles from its headwaters to its outlet. This year he was on its eastern side. Mr. Schrader's route was from the Allenkattet to the Kowack river. No mercantile or shipping company nor government backed up Mr. Bracken he bought all supplies and paid for the same and has doubtless gathered as much valuable information in his extensive exploration for Uncle Sam as if in his employment.

They had all the fresh meat desired; caribou, moose, mountain sheep, fish and fowl in abundance. Caribou crossed their trail in droves of thousands. They never met a white man on the trail, but met Indians near Fort Yukon.

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