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Order of the Midnight Sun

Some new information con-
cerning the mysterious
Brotherhood—Text
of the oath



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Who was Chief of Police in Dawson in 1900.
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IN last week's issue, a promise was made that further information concerning the Order of the Midnight Sun would be forthcoming. The critics of the West, some of them at least, still doubt the accuracy of the published statements. If these men would examine the public documents in the records of the Mounted Police at Ottawa, their doubts would vanish. Mr. Cody, who wrote the first article on the subject, was well posted by those who had seen these papers.

Herewith are the pictures of two men who were intimately concerned in the investigation. One of them was Chief of Police at Dawson at the time; the other was in charge of the secret service in the Mounted Police. Each had seen service in Montana whence came the jaunty, fat little agitator who organised the Order. The disturbance started in Dawson in the winter of 1900-01, when there was plenty of time to murmur and rail against the authorities. The mining laws were defective, the officials were crooked, gambling was unrestrained, the taxes were too high, the royalty was much too high, the miners' licenses were too expensive, and British Columbia was stiff-necked on the boundary question—these were their grievances. Any man who openly criticised the authorities was marked, tested, and perhaps invited into the order.

Then the agitators got both bold and careful. From a mere nest of objectors they became the centre of a conspiracy. This was bold. They soon deemed it best to move their headquarters to Skagway in United States territory. That was care. The leading conspirators were not unmindful of their own safety, since those unrelenting but thick-headed Police might possibly get wind of the game. In fact they did. The leaders at Skagway had got too bold and they had collected a great deal of money. The secret leaked out. It was learned in Dawson that there was such an organisation. The United States officials were communicated with and a raid was made on a building in Skagway.

The conspirators were forewarned. The leaders disappeared, but quantities of incriminating papers were found. These documents confirmed the suspicions and gave much interesting information which has not yet been revealed to the public. The Yukon was not captured by adventurers and was not handed over to the United States. The town of Skagway fell into ruin and abandon; the boundary dispute was settled, though not to Canada's satisfaction; and Dawson City is soon to be connected, by a military road, with Edmonton.

SOME DOCUMENTS.

The following document gives an idea of what line of argument and policy the order pursued:

TO THE CITIZENS OF SKAGWAY: Skagway is situated only forty miles from the head of navigation on the Yukon and a thousand miles nearer to the great Klondike placers than her rivals, Victoria and Vancouver. Most of the people of the interior are countrymen of hers, who, all else being equal, would give her preference in trade. Yet with every natural and geographical advantage in her favour and a daily train service to the inside, Skagway merchants stand idly behind their coun-

ters, while shipload after shipload of freight from far off Canadian ports are dumped at the wharf and headed on to the interior. In the season of 1898-9, out of \$7,000,000 worth of merchandise that went to the Yukon through the White Pass, only \$2,000,000 worth came from American ports (Skagway included), while the balance, \$5,000,000, was from Vancouver and Victoria.

It is a fact that, while the present tariff conditions prevail, Skagway will never reap the advantages from her superior trade location at the head of Lynn canal. If, in the natural course of events, the Yukon territory should be annexed to the United States, Skagway in all probability would be made the capital of the state, which would mean public buildings, forts, naval station, etc. The Canadian Government has subsidised an all-Canadian railway to the head waters of the Yukon. If this road is ever completed, Vancouver, Winnipeg and Eastern Canadian cities will enter the Yukon markets and Skagway will be killed. If we are successful the Canadian railroad will never be built in our time.

The Boundary Line Dispute: This question has rested too long and there is no indication that it will be settled soon. Capital hesitates to invest in the disputed territory and development is delayed. If we let the matter rest, a compromise, perhaps, will be had, and good territory given away. The Canadians hope to obtain a free port of entry on Lynn canal when settlement is made. If they succeed in this Skagway will be brought into competition with a Canadian town somewhere on Lynn canal. If our plan carries, the boundary question will be settled at once, and there will be no more talk of a free port.

THE OATH OF THE ORDER.

It will be seen by a perusal of the text of the oath taken by members of the Order that the object is left delightfully vague. Those on the inside whispered that it was their intention to found a new republic; there are many who think that the only object was to collect funds to sustain one or two agitators in luxury.

The Oath read as follows:

"By this book, and the holy contents thereof, I do hereby endorse the purpose for which the Order of the Midnight Sun was organised, and solemnly swear, pledging my honour as a gentleman, that I will in every way possible, and to the best of my ability, without respect of favour, friendship, love or hate, loss or gain, envy or malice, aid the members and officers of this Lodge in every legitimate effort to accomplish the purpose desired; that I will remain true to any trust that may be imposed on me as a member of this organisation, and will not expose any secrets thereof. I further promise to shield, protect and defend any member if necessary. So help me God."

The two men who were most concerned in the plot were never caught; one escaped to Montana, the other down into Alaska. The other guilty leaders were scattered; the offence of many hood-winked members was overlooked, and the episode passed into history. Even now it is not important, but it is an interesting sidelight on the history of the Yukon.