

WINTER TRIP TO THE OMENICA.

FOLLOWING LETTER FROM THE ASHCROFT MINING JOURNAL.

Hearing that you are about to issue a pamphlet on the different routes to be travelled in getting into the Yukon, Cassiar and Omenica districts by way of Ashcroft, I thought I would write and give you an account of my experience in getting into the Omenica last winter, as it may help some of your readers on a like trip.

We left Quesnelle on the 11th of March with eleven sleds and twenty-one men, two men to a sled with one exception, but the men all agree now that one man is the best. Our loads were not heavy, three hundred to a sleigh, and when we got to open country we made an average of twenty miles a day. The sleighs were five inches long, eighteen inches wide and four inches high, with one-and one-half inch runners which were found too narrow. Two inch to three inch is what I shall use if I go in again, as a three inch runner will stand if there is any crust at all, whereas our runners cut into all snow that was not quite hard. We had an example of this, one of our party's being 2 inches.

From Quesnelle we followed a trail, that two Indians from Stuart's lake had made two weeks before. For the first seventy-five miles the winter trail is very hilly, following the old telegraph trail all the way and our hardest work came there. After passing the Blackwater and Mud rivers, however, it follows a chain of small lakes, among which are Bobtail, Grouse and Chinkat, as far as Stony Creek. On getting there we found we could not make Stuart's lake in less than three days and as we were just out of grub decided to go to Fraser lake, where there was a Hudson Bay Company's post, about twenty-five miles from Stony creek. From Fraser we made Stuart's lake in two days and laid off there three days. From there the trail runs up to Manson creek by way of the Nation river, but as we had had a little experience of travelling on lakes we decided to go a hundred miles out of our way and keep to them if possible.

On leaving Fort St. James on the southern end of Stuart's lake, which we did with sorrowing hearts, as it was there we had our last taste of potatoes and fresh milk, we struck due north to the mouth of Peace river, which we made the first night, about thirty-two miles, then up the river to Cross or Trembleur lake and from there up Middle river to North Tatlah lake. After getting up it about forty miles we struck the toboggan trail that Indians made for packing into Manson creek from Hazelton, and then left the lake, going due east about seventy or eighty miles, getting into Manson creek on the sixth of April. As soon as we struck the Indian trail we had a picnic, as the toboggans had packed it hard and firm, and there

were old camps about every three miles along it, relieving us of the necessity of making a fresh camp every night. We carried a fly, which is the same as half a tent, cut from the ridge pole down. It is warmer than a tent, as a large fire can be built all along the face and it will draw the heat in the same manner as a reflector camp oven does and besides there is the reduction in weight. We had two pair of single or one pair of double blankets, and although the thermometer often went as low as 30 degrees below zero we always slept warmly.

The snow at Manson creek, where the companies that are operating in Omenica are located, disappears about the tenth of May, so that operations can commence at a comparatively early date there.

The trail in the summer is from Stuart's lake by way of the Nation river. The feed is good along this trail and about every fifteen miles you will find creek bottoms with grass enough to feed all the pack trains in British Columbia. About 15 miles from Stuart's lake there is a prairie covered with rich wild grasses and wild peavine. It is about five miles square and quite level. A large creek bounds it on two sides and altogether a finer proposition for a stock ranch could not be found. Then again about ten miles further on the north side of the Nation there are about six miles of valley land that the trail passes up that are also very rich in grass.

On coming out this fall we came from St. James on the Stuart lake to Soda creek in a canoe, a distance of two hundred and fifty-two miles in four hours and one-half. The rivers are easily navigated, canoes and scows coming down the whole way all the summer. You come down the Stuart river to the Nechaco and from it to the Fraser.

The country around Manson creek contains some of the finest hydraulic propositions in the country, and next year there will be numerous companies operating there, besides those that are already operating ground there.

There are two sawmills on the creek within a mile of each other capable of turning out from three to five thousand feet a day, and one has already cut about seventy-five thousand. It belongs to the 43rd Mining and Milling Company, of Ottawa. The other one is being run by the Omenica Consolidated hydraulic mine, of Victoria. Both these companies have good claims on Manson creek and expect a golden harvest, which from appearances seems assured. On Germanson creek, about six miles from Manson, the Caledonia General Mining Association of Victoria have nearly completed about eight miles of ditch and will be in a position to wash next year, and they also are confident, as their claim goes \$1 to the yard.

Charley McKinnon, on Lost creek, a tributary of the Manson, has found a lead that the Chinamen who worked it years ago lost, and as they took out a

pound of gold a day for nearly a year he is also confident of big returns next year.

Chinamen are scattered all through the country and often make \$5 a day by roeking. I have a claim there from which there has been taken as high as \$1 to the pan. I have got 30 cents to two pans. It is on Germanson creek, and if I do not dispose of it this winter I will go up again next year. The country is well adapted to hydraulicing, as water is abundant and there are numerous long level benches along each creek which hardly need to be surveyed to run a ditch on.

There was quite an excitement at Manson this year over some finds that were made on creeks running into the Nation river below the crossing, but as it was late in the summer the prospectors who went in were not able to do much, although they give good accounts of the country.

Hoping this letter will prove of some use to your readers, I am, yours truly,

B. WILKES.

Victoria, B.C., Sept. 28.

KLONDYKE GOLD.

An examination of a number of valuable nuggets from Dawson City, convinces the Western Mining World that the conclusions of geologists as to the erratic action of the ancient glaciers in that section are well founded. None of these nuggets have the slightest suggestion of an angle, being as nicely rounded as one of Emerson's sentences. Conditions do not suggest that this lack of angularity is due to the abrasions of travel, common to many placer propositions in more temperate regions, unless, indeed, it was deposited long before the Klondyke lost its tropical climate. But if this be true, why is the gold found in the frozen gravel instead of below it? The theory that it was conveyed by glacial action seems to be a tenable one. In the fantastic display of force these glaciers' ground up the vein matter, amalgamated the gold it contained, and deposited the precious burden in dirt and ice after it had been subjected to a pressure that effectually destroyed every suggestion of an angle. The Klondyke gold is of a light yellow color, much lighter than Montana gold, and carries none of the sunset tints so noticeable in the auriferous deposits of Australia.

Mines & Mining Stocks

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