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shores or sunken rocks. At the northern end
of this inside passage & 90 miles from the sea
is the head of Lynn Canal, which is 7 miles
wide & from 135 to 413 fathoms deep, but the
Wrangel Narrows, 100 miles further south,
are only $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile wide & 18 miles long, &
so shallow that rarely a steamer passes
through them without scraping on the bottom.
At another point in the long inside passage
conflicting tide currents swirl & rush 30 miles
an hour, & this place can only be passed at
slack water, either high or low.

At the head of Lynn Canal is Taiya Inlet,
14 miles long & but 1 mile wide, & into the
head of Taiya Inlet empty the Taiya & Skag-
way Rivers, each making a long mud delta
covered at high water, bare at low tide; &
here the tidal range is very great, 16 or more
feet. The Taiya & Skagway Rivers both
flow rapidly down from the summits of the
coast range of mountains. They are but tor-
rents, only 14 miles long from source to del-
tas, & within a few feet of their head-waters
are the head-waters of the Yukon; thus nat-
ural passes are formed from the coast to the
interior. By no other route is the distance so
short as up the Taiya River. There has al-
ways been an Indian village at Dyea, which
is doubly favored by being at the extreme head
of ocean navigation & nearest to the series
of lakes, Crater, Long & Deep, which empty
directly into Lake Lindeman. This lake in
turn empties into Lake Bennett, which is
but 40 miles from Dyea. From an engineer-
ing point of view the Skagway route is the
better, as the White Pass at the head of Skag-
way River is 600 ft. lower than the Chilkoot
Pass, but neither Indians nor miners used it.
Its series of lakes, Summit, Middle & Shallow,
are separated from Lake Bennett by a high
divide, & flow by long & shallow streams into
other lakes not so immediately available for
reaching the Yukon. Although the distance
to Lake Bennett is the same by survey over
each pass, the most enthusiastic backers
of the White Pass route have always consid-
ered it at least 10 miles longer, owing to its
extreme & lasting difficulty for foot & horse
travel. In former years at two seasons of the
year only was travel possible over the Chil-
koot Pass, in late winter when the snow was
hard & the lakes frozen, & in late summer
when the lakes were open for rafts & canoes.
It is strange that this easy & natural highway
for the Indian up the coast in a canoe, over
the pass with a pack on his back & down the
river on a raft, should have presented almost
insuperable obstacles to civilized travel.
The Indian in his dugout cared not for nar-
rows, shallows & currents, tides & flats. He
did not try to force them, but accommodated
himself to conditions as he found them, & was
governed by the seasons in his trips over the
pass, as was also the early gold seeker, who,
drifting north in 1877, made his way with In-
dian help over the Chilkoot Pass to the Yukon
River.

Between the final triumph of modern en-
gineering, the railroad, & the natural high-
way of the savage, there were many stages
of improvement which were more toilsome,
dangerous & expensive than the conditions
they are supposed to better. There was no
longer easy & sympathetic acquiescence in
nature's whims when the great gold rush
to the Yukon began in Aug. 1897. Just as
the engineer has substituted his work for
all other instruments or vehicles of trans-
portation over the White Pass, so also it is
the engineer who with his ocean steamers has

supplanted the Indian canoe, the sailboat, the
little coast steamers, but with the difference
that whereas the land engineer makes his own
road on which he safely runs his engines, the
naval engineer can only build a good steamer,
which too often is wrecked owing to the
culpable negligence of the U.S. government,
quick enough to install revenue collectors, but
exceedingly slow to chart, buoy and light
dangerous channels.

Nearly 5,000 people a month make the pas-
sage from Seattle & other Puget Sound cities
to south-eastern Alaska, & many thousand tons
of freight are also carried, yet aside from
a few buoys in Wrangel Narrows there is ab-
solutely nothing provided by the government
to aid the mariner in navigating those waters.
The Canadian government, both on land and
sea, is more prompt to act & to provide pro-
tection. It has a light-house on the Sister
Rocks in the Gulf of Georgia, another at
Cape Mudge at the entrance to Discovery
Passage & yet another at Egg Island. The
disastrous wrecks almost without exception
have occurred in U.S. waters. As canoes
gave way to ocean-going vessels in these un-
buoyed & unlighted channels, the government
pilot charts were improved with pasters sug-
gesting that the chart was not more than 5
miles out of the way. Steamer after steamer
was lost, the Mexico sank in Aug., 1897, on
her return trip from carrying the first load of
gold seekers, the Corona stranded in Nov. of
the same year, the Clara Nevada ran on a
rock & burned or blew up with a loss of all
on board in the following Feb., & since then
a dozen other steamers have either grounded
or been totally wrecked. These dangers &
losses continue to date. On Feb. 15, 1899,
the Humboldt, a fine California steamer, went
on the rocks between Juneau & Wrangel, &
was in gravest danger; early in Mar. the
Dirigo stranded but was finally dragged off
with severe damage; later in Mar. the Tees,
a Canadian steamer, was reported fast on the
rocky Alaskan coast & on Mar. 29 the City
of Topeka of the Pacific Coast Steamship Co.
went fast on a ledge in Wrangel Narrows.

As the engineer was not able to take the
survey & improvement of the sea highway
out of the hands of the government he turned
his attention to terminals for the carriers both
by land & water which his skill had evolved,
& here also the transition from the perfectly
safe landing of the Indian canoe on the flat
beach above high water to the equally safe
landing of the ocean steamer at a deep sea
wharf, beyond the fall of the lowest tide, has
been through intermediate steps expensive &
dangerous. The first load of gold seekers in
Aug., 1897, found no wharves at Dyea or
Skagway, & the hastily gathered mining out-
fits were either lightered ashore at great ex-
pense, or at low tide dumped off the steamers
to be submerged by the returning waters un-
less rapidly moved by waggons whose owners
charged extortionate rates. Prices for pack-
ing over the pass had been 12 to 15c. a pound
in the old days of Indian-back, but they rapid-
ly rose to 47c. by the Dyea or Chilkoot trail &
to sixty cents by the Skagway trail. Block-
ades occurred, paths turned into bottomless
pits, & pandemonium was everywhere. It is
a curious illustration of the fallibility of intel-
ligent human judgment that nearly all the
capitalists organized transportation com-
panies to reach the Klondike by way of the
mouth of the Yukon, leaving the nearer &
obvious road in the hands of men without
capital but with plenty of energy & ready
quickness.

A comparison of the two routes to Dawson,
down & up the river, should have been suffi-
cient to convince one as to their relative
values. Dawson is 1,600 miles from the Puget
Sound cities. Of this distance 1,000 miles
are by inland sea, 40 are by mountain pass,
the balance down lakes & rivers. This route
is open 8 months in the year. By the other