

THE ROAD TO THE GOLD FIELDS.

but on this side a switch back could not have been avoided. The road is narrow gauge, but the road bed and construction are adapted for broad gauge. It is one of the most solid and substantial road beds in America. The illustrations show the character of the work.

This railroad has already made Skagway the coming city of Alaska, and thus ended the race between the older Indian Dyca and the younger American city. It will do more. It will change the freight route to Dawson from an up-river to a down-river movement. Even this year barges to carry twenty tons can be bought at Bennett for \$300. or, competent men will contract to deliver freight with their own barges for four cents a pound to Dawson. Contracts are now being made from Seattle and Tacoma, from Victoria and Vancouver to Dawson via the White Pass for \$160 a ton, or eight cents a pound. This through rate may fall to six cents when the railroad reaches Bennett. Even eight cents is lower than the rates hitherto charged by the long mouth-of-the-Yukon route. Passenger travel will all take the shorter road and freight will inevitably follow passengers.

Another and more serious result of the completion of this railroad line to the summit is the inevitable diversion of a trade thus far almost exclusively in American hands to Canadian points and houses. Last year, the high duties imposed by the Canadians were fully off-set by the extortionate charges made for bonding and conveying Canadian goods through the American strip. This year the railroad furnishes the bond for a nominal charge and ships Canadian goods in bonded cars, delivering either at summit of pass, in British territory, or at Log Cabin or Bennett. It is not possible for American merchants to stand thirty per cent. duty and also the Canadian custom house delays, annoyances and extortions at Log Cabin. Last year Americans made these annoyances an off-set for a thirty per cent. duty, but hereafter the Canadians are protected by both duty and annoyances, and even if American meats and hardware are taken to the Yukon they will enter Canada elsewhere and go through in bond.

Happily however this possible loss of Klondike trade will be more than offset by the very sensational discoveries of gold made near the shores of Bering Sea, at Golovin Bay and Cape Nome. The climate at these points is comparatively mild, they are most easily accessible by boat for five months in the year and the region is described by those who know it as an Arctic paradise.

The Klondike madness is past. In two short years the savage trail with a dozen Indian packers has been replaced with transportation facilities with a capacity exceeding the requirements of the