

THE UPPER STEWART RIVER REGION.

INTRODUCTION.

The Stewart river, one of the principal tributaries of the Yukon, drains an extensive region lying between the basin of the Pelly river to the south, and that of the Peel river to the north. It rises in the Pacific-Arctic watershed ranges and flows in a general westerly direction toward the Yukon valley. It is navigable throughout the season for river steamers as far as Frazer falls, a distance of 200 miles from the Yukon.

EARLY BAR MINING.

The Stewart was one of the first rivers in the Yukon territory to attract the attention of miners. In the year 1883 and for several years following gold was found in paying quantities on the bars along the lower portion of the river.

No bar mining of any account is now carried on, but an occasional miner spends the latter portion of the season when the water is low "rocking" on some of the numerous bars between Mayo river and Lake creek. The expert in this kind of mining is always sure of at least a grub stake. In 1900 Mr. R. G. McConnell made an examination of the Stewart river as far as Frazer falls. There are no previous records of the river above this point and very little appears to have been known about it previous to 1898. During this and the following year several prospectors crossed the divide from the Mackenzie side and descended the Stewart to the Yukon. In the same years large parties of gold seekers ascended the river, but very few of them went beyond Frazer falls as the reports brought down were not encouraging.

In 1895 coarse gold was first discovered on the streams tributary to the Stewart and from that time until the present time new discoveries of placer gold of more or less importance have been made each year. The Clear Creek and the Duncan Creek mining districts were established and included all the streams tributary to the Stewart as far east as the Mayo river and its branches.

Although some of the creeks in these districts were rich in placer gold the average remuneration was small. The difficulties and expense of mining and transport, and the inexperience of many of the miners have hitherto tended to keep down the profits and to discourage prospecting.

The area, however, in which it might reasonably be expected to find placer gold is large, and, with cheaper supplies and a better knowledge of the methods of mining best suited to the conditions,