

opened up, by way of the Stikine river, or by Chilkat Pass (which is shorter than by Chilkoot), or by other ways. On July 22, 1897, a joint resolution for the construction of toll-roads in Alaska was reported favorably in the United States Senate, from the Committee on Territories, by Senator Carter. The resolution authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to grant rights of way two hundred feet wide. Franchises are to be limited to twenty years. The rates of toll are to be approved by the Secretary of the Interior, and the roads are to be under the supervision of the Secretary. The resolution applies to "trails, wagon roads and other highways." This will afford opportunity for a decided improvement in the means of interior communication. Transportation of supplies will be easier and more reliable. The organization of new transportation companies from the United States to Alaska will remove the carrying of food and equipments from the hands of the monopolies that have controlled them heretofore. Prices will go down, conditions of life will be ameliorated, and in many ways the mere business of sustaining life, to say nothing of digging fortunes, will be a less desperate struggle a few years hence than just now.

Meanwhile, the gold supply will hold out. The presence of these placer deposits yielding rough gold indicates that the precious metal has not been carried far from its original quartz veins, and suggests that there are treasures yet locked in the rocky chests of the mountains, to be taken out when the placer gold has been picked up, and when, in the due course of events, it becomes practicable to transport milling machinery into the interior or to carry the unmilled ore to the coast. The gold deposits exist over a length of 500 or 600 miles. New districts will be discovered and opened up year by year during probably the next ten or twenty or thirty years. Now that the first rich diggings have been found, the progress is likely to be fairly steady.

In order to understand intelligently the conditions which will surround the enterprising man who, like the Spanish conquerors of old, sets out to make his conquest of Alaska, it is necessary to glance at the history, physical characteristics, and governmental regulations, before taking up the more local subject of the Yukon gold deposits.

HISTORY.

In 1725, under commission of Peter the Great, an expedition crossed the continent from St. Petersburg to Kamschatha. Here a vessel, the *Gabriel*, was constructed in 1728, and sailed with Vitus