

This is the reason that ninety-nine men out of every hundred who went in this year have sold their outfit and returned, not having gone a mile from the Yukon to prospect, with the story that the country is no good, has been boomed, etc.

It is true that the extraordinary tales of the Klondike riches have not only attracted many thousands, but have created a wild inflated condition of things which a year or so will remedy. For example, men are offered \$12 a cord to cut wood, and few or no takers. Men do not appear to like to work in there. It is hard to get many to work for even \$12 or \$15 per day. I am not surprised, therefore, that so many are returning dissatisfied.

I reached Dawson when it was partly under flood. The first question asked me when I landed was, "Have you any whisky? We have been without four days and we have been expecting some in over the trail." It came in in a few days—2,000 gallons—which sold for \$75 per gallon. In a few days more the first boat arrived and its load consisted of 600 gallons of whisky, which sold at \$50 per gallon—the first provisions to reach these people reported to be starving. I was told that the man who last year sold ladies' red shirt waists—out of style—for \$5 each, which he had bought in job lots at fifteen cents each, brought in a soda water fountain and made \$14,000 by it in a few weeks. I saw some bananas, asked the price—\$1 a piece. Money! There seems to be no limit to it. But Dawson itself seemed, so far as I could see, free from drink, games of speculation, or lawlessness of any kind. On the water front the crowd swayed to and fro, by night as by day, reminding me in one aspect of the "Midway" at the World's Fair. Sickness has been and is very prevalent at Dawson. Much of it is due to the ill-cooked food which men eat and the Klondike water, which some think is impregnated with arsenic. It is, all in all, a unique place. Its inhabitants are well disposed in every way, and extremely satisfied with the richness of the claims in the district, as well as their great extent.

The minds of all men seem to have become inebriated with the great ideas of sudden fortunes, vast and rich wealth in the claims, and the spirit of speculation has become an epidemic. But in a year or so they will become sober and then the country will be dealt with in a way by which it will be developed and its wonderful resources made apparent. The country is not yet prospected. Ninety-nine out of every hundred who went in this year were not prepared for the above condition of things, and I felt very sorry that this was the case and that they have had to return, not only unrewarded, but after the sacrifices they made and the hardships they endured.

You would be surprised to see the number of steamers which have entered the mighty Yukon this year—that river which but a few years ago never had its solemn silence broken with the whistle of a steamboat. Between Anvik and St. Michael we passed thirty. Beyond Anvik ascending or descending were probably thirty or forty more. You ought to see the magnificent steamers, with their excellent equipment of electric light, etc., similar to and not surpassed by the Mississippi steamboats, built and put on the Yukon by different companies. Those built by the Alaska Commercial Company cost \$95,000 each. One of this company's new tow steamers, *Louise*, came up the river pushing two immense barges loaded with 900 tons of freight, and yet, pushing them up that strong current, made seven and a half miles per hour. And I am positively afraid to think what the result will be of all the capital thus invested in these boats. Is it—will it be—justified? I cannot say. But these companies have trained and experienced men who know their business and understand the conditions, hence we naturally reason that they must be satisfied that the resources of this country must be very rich and great or they would not adventure such an outlay. From \$10,000,000 to \$15,000,000 of an output this year, in the face of extremely difficult conditions, is a wonderful amount; yet it may be doubled next year.