

below the level of the actual stream. It is so far the only locality which has been found to yield 'coarse gold' but from the extremely wide distribution of 'fine gold,' it may safely be predicted that many more like it remain to be discovered.

"Mining can scarcely be said to have begun in the region more than five years ago, and the extent of country over which gold has been found in greater or less quantity is already very great. Most of the prospecting has been confined to the banks and bars of the large rivers, and it is only when their innumerable tributary streams begin to be closely searched, that 'gulch diggings' like those of Dease, McDane and other streams in the Cassiar district, and possibly even on a par with Williams and Lightning creeks in Cariboo, will be found and worked. The general result so far has been to prove that six large and long rivers, the Lewes, Teslin too, Big Salmon, Pelly, Stewart and White, yield 'fine gold' along hundreds of miles of their lower courses. With the exception of the Lewes, no part of the headwaters of any of these have yet been prospected or even reached by the miners, and scarcely any of their innumerable tributaries have been examined. The developments made up to this time are sufficient to show that when means of access are improved, important bar-mining will take place along all these main rivers, and there is every reason to anticipate that the result of the examination in detail of the smaller streams will be the discovery of much richer auriferous alluviums. When these have been found and worked, quartz mining will doubtless follow, and the prospects for the utilization of this great mining field in the near future appear to me to be very promising."

With some knowledge of the geological conditions and history of gold mining in the corresponding region included in British Columbia to the south, a forecast of the kind became perfectly safe, and subsequent events have more than verified it. Mining was first successfully extended to various tributaries of Forty-mile Creek, then to a number of branches of Sixty-Mile Creek, further to the south, and the late phenomenally rich discoveries on Klondyke River have drawn universal attention to the entire district.

We have as yet no technical details of the actual mode of occurrence of the gold on the Klondyke and its tributaries, but it is safe to assume that it is here, as elsewhere, contained in the lowest gravel deposits of these valleys, at a certain depth below the level of the existing streams. "Coarse" or "heavy" gold, is never found in quantity at a distance from its place of origin, and if the rich placers of this locality should be found to extend for more than a few miles along each of the valleys, it will be an exception to the general rule. The fact that the ground is frozen beneath the superficial covering of moss and soil, although it affects the methods to be employed in mining, does not necessarily show that the deposits are different in character from those met with elsewhere, for, at the time when the greater part of the erosion and concentration of gold occurred, the climate of this whole region was undoubtedly much more genial than it is now. A similar state of affairs was found in the Cassiar district of British Columbia, which though further south is at a higher altitude, but after the forest and moss had been cleared away, little further complaint was heard of frozen ground.

The fact that a number of rich "bed rock" creeks, including Forty-mile, Sixty-mile and the Klondyke, with their tributaries, have been found in a portion of the Yukon district not more than 100 miles in total length and all within a short distance of the main river, indicates that the district as a whole must now be regarded as one of remarkable promise for further discoveries of the same kind. To what parts of the region, with its countless streams, the attention of the prospector may next be most profitably directed, is a question of importance. In British Columbia, we know that the richer placers,

beginning with the Kootenay district, and continuing in Cariboo, Omenica and Cassiar, follow a belt of country to the south-west of the Rocky Mountains proper, but nearer to the mountains than to the Coast Ranges. The geological conditions are very similar throughout this belt, and are again the same, so far as known, in the tract running from Cassiar, to Forty-mile Creek, including the Klondyke as well as much of the drainage-basins of the Stewart, Pelly, Big Salmon and Teslin-too. In the numerous tributaries of these rivers, then, the search for further local deposits of "heavy" gold may, it would appear, be prosecuted with the greatest chances of meeting with further discoveries.

Much of the Yukon district is by no means the Arctic region that it is often pictured. Hardy crops can, and now will be grown in it. Much of it is well wooded and along the lower valleys the timber, generally spruce, attains a fair size. Efficient means of communication once provided, the mineral wealth of the district will be exploited with greater facility than that of the woodless and waterless regions of Arizona. Exclusive of one important break, caused by the White Horse Rapids and Miles Canon on Lewes River, there is on the Canadian side of 141st meridian, a connected water communication available for stern-wheel steamers of over 1000 miles, and after passing other obstacles on the various great rivers, there are many additional long water-stretches. The immediate difficulty to be faced lies in the fact that the communication is almost entirely by water, and that no matter what efforts may be made to place supplies on the rivers, the small number of steamers at present available will be unable, before the onset of the long and severe winter, to carry these to the points to which the streams of miners are trending. Thus it is that much suffering and even absolute starvation may occur in the district, and that it is absolutely impossible to prevent this with the existing facilities if a large number of men carrying insufficient supplies with them congregate in the mining camps. With a scarcity of food there can be no work and no high wages for the man without independent resources. All claims of value along the streams already proved to be rich will be found to be taken up, and it will be practically impossible for him to travel in search of new ground during the winter.

Before the spring, preparations will undoubtedly be made such as to meet all requirements of the incoming miner, and during the summer of 1898 much of the district will be prospected for placer deposits. The requisite means of transport will be provided, and before long the veins and lodes from which the alluvial deposits have been derived, will be discovered and worked. The present rich finds, particularly available to the individual with little capital besides enterprise and muscle, will afford the necessary incentive to the opening up of the entire country, and in my opinion, the development of quartz mining in the Yukon district, although, it may precede will not long antedate the establishment of a chain of permanent mining camps extending from Kootenay to the inland boundary of Alaska.

GEORGE M. DAWSON.

#### British Columbia's Company Laws.

Many American critics, connected with Western mining, as also some few British promoters or would-be promoters of mining companies, intended to operate in British Columbia, complain more or less loudly of the amendment and consolidation of the Provincial Joint Stock Company laws, recently effected by the Legislature, in pursuance of recommendations made by a special committee of the House. This special committee consisted of Attorney-General Eberts, Mr. H. D. Helmcken, Q.C., and Messrs. Rithet, Cotton and Sword, five of the ablest men in the Legislature, together representing "both