

## DAWSON MERCHANT'S VIEWS

### Regarding Mining Laws and Existing Conditions.

#### Suggests a Mass Meeting of Canadians, in Which Officers Will Be Asked to Participate.

Editor Daily Nugget: In your issue of this date, February 15th, I note that at a meeting of the Dawson Board of Trade the report of the committee on mines and mining was the sole topic of discussion, and that one of the principal features of the report was the matter of royalty. I also note in your issue of the same date an editorial in which the royalty question is discussed from a loyal Dawsonite's standpoint. With the recommendation of the mining committee and with your editorial bearing on the same point, I most heartily concur, as must every man who would see Dawson prosper—every person who would see business industries and property values keep up to anything near what they have been in the halcyon days of the past, from which standard I must say they are both at present very rapidly receding.

I am not a mine owner or operator, but I am a merchant and I have been engaged in business in Dawson for nearly two and a half years. I am a Canadian, of which fact I have ever been proud, but of late I have been constrained to blush for my country, or rather for my countrymen, as it is by the almost imbecile acts of the latter that business in the Yukon country has been throttled and the flow of revenue into the coffers of both the merchant and the government has been reduced fully one half within the space of a few months.

Not satisfied with retaining half the claims to itself the government must needs lay a tax on all gold produced, which tax, or royalty, is in fully one half the cases more than the operator has left as the reward for his business venture and enterprise. In many cases the miner operator would be lucky to clear above all expenses the 10 per cent royalty he is now forced to turn into the greedy maw of the government. The result of this oppression is that mining property for immediate working purposes has greatly decreased in value—in fact, is not marketable for the reason that there are no purchasers. The mines that are today being operated are being operated on a "tooth and toe nail" basis, the owner being fearful lest he expend more than will be realized at the cleanup after paying all expenses at top-notch prices, including the ten per cent donation to the government.

This condition affects the merchant and every other business man in Dawson. It causes an air of depression to hang like a pall over every pursuit in the city from the wholesaler of all needfuls down to the man who peddles hot tamales. Not content with the rigid laws governing the operation of claims after they have been located, those in power must needs legislate the prospector wholly and entirely out of business and out of the country. Where is the prospector of two years ago? Is he out in the valleys and hills looking for new mining fields, the discovery and development of which will add thousands, perhaps millions, to the wealth of the Canadian government by the alternate ten claim system? He is not. On the other hand he has packed his pick and shovel, blankets and frying pan and gone in quest of fields in which he is less restricted than in the Yukon.

This is the deplorable condition in which Dawson and the Klondike is found at present, and no steps have been or are being taken to retard the downward fall. Already the general business of Dawson, as well as that of the license issuing and recording office, has fallen off one-fourth

within the past three months as compared with that of one year ago in the same departments, and I venture the prediction based on present indications that those of us who are here in the year 1901, if any of us are left by that time, we will see less than one-fifth the business transacted, less than one-fifth the money made by the government and less than one-fifth the number of people here that we saw in the year 1899.

Now, the question is: how can matters and existing conditions be remedied? As for me, I think the desired ends may be brought about by concert of action on the part of we Canadians, and I am confident that nine in every ten of us are anxious to bring about a betterment. I am also confident that our officials will aid and assist us in the good work. I know it is not natural that office holders should openly denounce the government that has placed the pap bottle to their lips, but no denunciation is necessary. On the contrary, it is the duty of the officers who are on the ground to point out the mistakes which the government is making, which mistakes are not due to anything other than ignorance of circumstances and conditions as they exist in this country, which by the way, the majority of our lawmakers at Ottawa know as little as the average Canadian knows of the Transvaal country. My suggestion is that the representative Canadians hold a meeting (it could be properly called an emergency meeting), and ask the officials to attend. I believe there is not one of them so blind but that he sees ruin for the district at no long distance ahead—on the road we are now traveling. At that meeting let a correct, accurate and detailed account of conditions as they now exist, the future discouraging prospects and the causes of their existence be clearly depicted and let every Canadian civilian, officer and what not join in signing a monster petition to our government at Ottawa to have remedied laws enacted and put in operation at the earliest possible day, that our descent down the incline on which we are now well started be slackened if not entirely stopped.

I am not an anarchist or a Boer, but a loyal subject of our queen who is here endeavoring to better my condition by honest trade and traffic. I am willing to go down, if needs be, in my country's defence, but I object to going down by means of my country's foolish, radical and arbitrary laws as I am now doing.

Mr. Editor, please excuse this encroachment on your valuable space. I could say more, but in justice to my country, my fellowman and myself I could not well say less.

DAWSON MERCHANT.

#### The Probst Benefit.

Messrs. C. W. Tennant and J. W. Stingle have charge of the arrangements of the concert to be given on February 25th for the benefit of Mat Probst. The Yukon Field Force band, under the leadership of Sergeant McKinnon, have volunteered their services for the occasion. In order to give an entertainment of the very best class, the committee intend to secure an orchestra. Messrs. Tennant and Stingle earnestly request the co-operation of those possessing vocal talent, and persons desiring to communicate with them should leave word at the office in the A. C. Co.'s store.

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THE TRADING & EXPLORING CO., LTD.

Per J. B. Wood, Manager

Feb. 12, 1900.

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WADE & AIKMAN—Advocates, Notaries, etc. Office, A. C. office Building, Dawson.

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