

## THE OTTAWA COMMITTEE REPORTS.

## What Mr. Livernash and His Associates Have Accomplished.

**They Knocked the Railway Steal in the Head—New Laws Will Soon be Enforced—Unrepresented Claims Illegally Withheld.**

The mass meeting Friday evening to hear the report of Messrs. M. Landreville and Edward J. Livernash, two of the three commissioners sent out last fall to plead the cause of the Klondike before the Canadian parliament, was attended by at least 7000 earnest men. Judge Miller was chairman and first introduced Mr. Landreville. That gentleman was placed on the commission to represent the French-Canadian element of the district and did remarkably good work among the French-Canadian members at Ottawa, but he begged to be excused from addressing the meeting in the English language in which he was not over fluent.

Many in the meeting were new comers and did not know Mr. Livernash and only knew in a general way what he had been sent to do. For the benefit of such Mr. Livernash related the circumstances which led up to the sending of the committee of three. The Klondike miners last year had heard the dark rumors of a 20 per cent royalty and kindred regulations, and while many disbelieved the rumors, still they all decided that even if not already an accomplished fact such legislation was threatening and Klondike must speak for herself. Accordingly a petition was drafted and a committee of three appointed to present it personally to the ministers at Ottawa. It was thought wise that this being a Canadian country at least two of the committee should be Canadians. Dr. A. E. Willis, at that time official surgeon at Dawson, was a gentleman who had been in the country long before there was any Klondike. He was a Canadian and was chosen partly for that reason. Mr. Landreville was chosen to represent the French-Canadian element while Mr. Livernash was chosen to represent the American population, which had so strangely overrun this Canadian country. The gentlemen of the committee went out over the ice in order to reach Ottawa early in the parliament session and besides the petition bore with them a stack of affidavits testifying to the true conditions of Klondike mining and showing the injustice of the new regulations cutting down the 500 foot claims to 100 feet, imposing a royalty on the gross output of 20 per cent and retaining to the crown alternate claims.

Considering that a large portion of evil from which we suffered were the results of the misinformation of unscrupulous or careless newspapers and having promised not to give their instructions for publication, Mr. Livernash severed his connection with the New York Journal and San Francisco Examiner that his whole energy might be devoted to the object on which he was sent. Dr. Willis resigned his government position that he might also be free and unhindered. However, the petition had been given to the press ahead of time and was already speaking for the Yukon miners. The government had taken cognizance of that petition and had increased the size of claims to 250 feet, had changed the reservation of claims to alternate blocks of 10, and had reduced the royalty from 20 per cent to 10. They waited upon the minister of the interior and found him out, but over the telephone that gentleman courteously asked them to fix a time for meeting them. When that time arrived the house was engaged in important debate, yet Minister Sifton left his seat and with Minister Blair and Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier, went to meet our miners' committee. In the library, throughout the interview the government showed the utmost courtesy and an anxiety to acquire information on Klondike matters. Mr. Livernash's words are: "If the Klondike has a friend in the world that gentleman is undoubtedly Sir Wilfrid Laurier. We found the gentlemen sublimely ignorant on the commonest matters pertaining to gold mining in the frozen north, and I verily believe they could not have told bed rock from a ham sandwich." (Much laughter.) Sir Wilfrid, at the conclusion of the interview, said: "The facts you bring to me are overwhelming. Doubtless we have made mistakes through ignorance. Present your cause and prove the mistakes. We promise you nothing but give us time."

The petition and affidavits were filed and the next 10 days were utilized in compiling a statement of their case. They had it printed in the form of a little book and every member and minister was provided with one. Leading newspapers were also furnished a copy as also was Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, minister for the colonies in London, England. In succeeding debates the book was used as a text book and its good work otherwise made apparent. Mr. Livernash then went on to give the political aspects of the question showing why it was that their demands have not been immediately granted. A great party was working out a large policy, for Sir Wilfrid was a man of large calibre with large ideas and ambitions. The party had just put through a set of mining regulations considered by them in their ignorance to be eminently fair and eminently just. To immediately adopt another set would be to confess itself a blunderer and give the opposition a much-sought-for club to beat them with. Besides, utterly unknown to the miners of the Yukon there had arisen a number of schemes. Prominently among them the Stikine railroad bill, which had become a pet measure of the government. This railroad robbery scheme is given in another column of this paper.

Mr. Livernash and his fellow-committeemen at once attacked the measure, even though undisturbed by the miners who sent them. They considered it of more vital import than even the royalty, and were quite sure the miners would instruct them to that effect if they knew of the proposed pre-empting of the whole Klondike country by two large railroad schemes, Messrs. Mackenzie and Mann. This action put them temporarily in opposition to the government. The railroad bill had passed the house and the committee was just in time to nip it in the senate. The largest room in the building was set apart for them and they were met by a large and notable assembly of Canada's great men, the crowd extending through the open doors into the halls. The conference lasted for hours and the result was that the railroad bill was overwhelmingly defeated. Livernash upon the matter, Mr. Livernash said: "If your committee had done nothing else than defeat this railroad bill it yet would have well served the Klondike miners. The remarks of Mr. Livernash on Mr. Ogilvie, acted with the government, provoked much mirth. Part of his 'calm and official utterances' were sent showing that not to the news-

papers alone was the disastrous royalty legislation wholly attributed to Ogilvie first heard of the royalty when at St. Michaels, on his way out. He is reported to have exclaimed: "God, they will kill the country." The nearer he got to Ottawa, however, the less forcible became his denunciation until, when he arrived there, he could not be heard at all. "Keep your eye on Mr. Ogilvie," the gentleman recommended the railroad bill which made an all-Canadian route. In all honesty, he must be confessed that he did not for a moment have any idea that the government would frame a national policy on the handful of notes he had in mind that you leave him alone to thank, for in newspaper accounts of the coming "richness," Mr. Livernash here read a quotation from Ogilvie's report and also comments by the Toronto Globe. "Four millions to the claim was given by this gentleman as a conservative estimate of Bonanza prospect's production. Ogilvie had even forgotten to expect a production. The great feat of mining in this section. When given the facts as to the enormous expenses of mining the government had replied that they were going to bring those expenses down to a reasonable basis by solving certain transportation problems. The committee convinced them that the proposed solution was no solution at all. Of the hundred and one companies chartered to freight up the Yukon past experiences had taught that but a very small number would ever get a boat up to Dawson with either freight or passengers. The Stikine delusion as a cheaper freight was simply a delusion. Operations had all so far proved inadequate to say the least. Conditions on the Yukon could never be modified so that cheap mining could be carried on as in other sections of the Dominion.

There is always a Judas in every twelve. I am sorry to say that the opponent of the railroad bill at the elbow of our opponents, to catch us tripping in any way possible, and giving all the assistance in his power to help put through this railroad bill which was to everything worth having." (A voice—"Name him! Name him!") (A voice—"I have said I would not name him!") (A voice—"We'll hang him!") "Talking about hanging let me tell you that it was once said outside that if I ever returned here I would be hung on a tree 50 feet high, if a tree that high could be obtained." (laughter) "This was when we were opposing the railroad scheme and when I first heard in Canada that I was an American."

Mr. Livernash repeatedly complimented the Canadians on the fairness they had always shown when made acquainted with the true facts. There was no inclination apparent to cinch the miners; indeed it was conceded by all the public men that if the country could be made to do with all that was required. The estimates of expenses of police and soldiery were excessive, but they were based upon the enormous cost of getting in last winter's supplies.

The fee for miners' licenses was never designed as a revenue measure but in the first place was given in response to a clamor from Victoria and Vancouver, but was intended as a slap at Seattle and other cities which were getting so much of the trade. Now you can get your licenses anywhere. In conclusion Mr. Livernash summed up the good which was to come from their educational stay at the capital. No more are to be governed by "word of mouth" commissions. Major Walsh was here in a provisional capacity and his commission was a verbal one from the minister of the interior. There will be a new commissioner and a council of six. The council of six will have to do with civil affairs but will have nothing to do with the mines or miners. The privy council of Canada will control the commissioner and formulate all mining regulations. It is virtually promised that as soon as is consistent new mining regulations will be given us based on the committee's representations. The ministers have decided the royalty to be excessive. The minister for railroads had stated that the change in the gold commissioner's office at once and more could be added. Even now official facts and figures are being collected with a view to new regulations to be issued before the end of summer, and a restoration of claims to 500 feet in length is one of the all but promised changes. Sir Wilfrid Laurier said he and the ministry "mean well by the Klondike and what mistakes had been made were purely mistakes of misinformation and as soon as is consistent you will get everything you ask."

Mr. Livernash spoke for two hours and the valuable information he gave must be condensed. The reverting of unrepresented claims to the crown and their being withheld from the prospector is strictly illegal. Such claims are at this moment open for re-entry. The reduction in the royalty is likely to be on a sliding scale which will make an average of about two per cent or one per cent straight royalty will be collected on the gross output.

Unrepresented claims are only kept from the prospector by an illegal ruling of the gold commissioner, and are, in fact, at this moment as eligible for staking and recording as ever in the history of the country. No changes are probable in the resurveying of the government's block of ten claims. These claims will be handled at Ottawa for the benefit of non-miners.

The grant of land to Messrs. Mackenzie and Mann, which virtually handed over to that firm all the unrecorded mineral land, has been knocked on the head for the time being. Dawson itself will be given a measure of local government.

Royalty as a main source of revenue will be abandoned and an equitable tax substituted which will rest evenly upon the shoulders of all and not leave the expense of government, as at present, wholly upon the shoulders of the miners. "The only men who work in the camp," the despot and irresponsible powers of the gold commissioner will be cut down and his duties defined, so that all may know them, and for his acts he will be made responsible.

Timber is not to be given away to outsiders. The importance of the fuel supply has been recognized and it is to be disposed of to the best advantage of the miners by the authorities on the ground. A new commissioner and a larger force of clerks is promised.

If the camp is quiet and well behaved the expensive soldiery will be reduced or removed entirely and taxation proportionately lessened thereby.

The feeling of Canadians outside is friendly to this section though all recognize it as an alien camp. No discrimination is to be made against us in duties on that score, nor is it desired by the government to squeeze the Klondike for the benefit of the Manitoba.

The invalid act of Commissioner Fawcett have resulted in such a tangle that the government has given up all hopes of being able to disentangle the maddies he has brought about. A validating act was thought of but the knotted ends are too contradictory and diverse. Deals with clear cases can hope to have things straightened out by application to the proper authorities at Ottawa.

The incidents during Mr. Livernash's two-hour report were numerous. He was repeatedly cheered, and at the conclusion received a

"three times three." Then a vote of thanks and endorsement was put to the Canadians in the audience and the show of hands proved them to be much more numerous than many supposed. Then a show of hands was called from the whole meeting and the waving of hats and cheers could not but have been very gratifying to Mr. Livernash and his fellow-committeemen. There were no dissenters.

On motion, the following committee was appointed to draw up formal resolutions of acceptance for the report, and thanks to the committee for their earnest, conscientious and intelligent actions in behalf of the miners. Messrs. Woodworth, Dunneavy, Pelletier, Miller and McGregor.

The resolutions are to be published broadcast over the land. The committee remained at Ottawa until assured by the ministry that the odious railroad bill was not to be re-introduced this session of parliament.

## Thousands of Outfits for Sale.

Petticoat Lane, in London, does not show any more active trading, and a greater slashing in prices on clothing than can be found in Dawson's sand-bar avenues to-day. Never before in the history of the country has there been such a buying and selling at such prices, and there never will be again. The unfortunate stampede of people from every point on the globe, every man or woman bringing in an outfit and some of them large stocks of goods to sell, has created a condition of congestion in trade which will never be repeated. Two-thirds of the people have either gone out or are making hasty preparations to go before winter sets in. Provisions have not yet made their appearance up the river in anything like the quantity that has been promised, so that the selling out of outfits of provisions has not put the prices down below cost; it is in clothing that the most remarkable slashing goes on. The sand-bar has been laid off into two principal tent streets—Wall street and Bowery street. Both are lined with clothing outfits for sale. Sellers have become so eager and buyers so scarce that auctioneering has been resorted to by a number of the sellers. The prices secured on tents and clothes are often 50 per cent of the prices in Seattle or Victoria. If a man's time is worth anything at all in coming over the passes and packing and sledding his goods, every pound he brings costs him a dollar. Yet, by standing around the impromptu auctioneers for a while one can see oak sleds go for a dollar, suits of oilskins for a dollar and a half, tents from two to three dollars, boots, shoes, and rubber boots and the thousand and one things we all brought with us going at prices which would make a Clark street, Chicago, second-hand man sick with envy. Blankets, fur clothing, caps and sleeping bags, mackintoshes, wagon sheets, packstraps and creepers—everything must be sold at once, quickly. The demoralization is perfect. However, the men selling out have the consolation of knowing that if they have to sell cheaply, steamboat rates are also taking a drop to meet them.

What bitter disappointments some of these people will have to recount when they get out. At Shovel Camp, with the trip barely commenced, better prices could have been obtained for everything; yet they lagged and tugged, packed in snow and over hills of ice, faced storms and dangerous rivers, took their lives in their hands a hundred times—many of them dying from over-work and the results of unwonted exposure. It is not at all surprising that there are long faces among the newcomers. The nights are getting darker and the appearance of furs upon the streets betokens the approach of winter, and the light-heartedness and levity noticeable on the trail has flown.

## Reports From Eureka and Sulphur Creeks.

Eureka creek, on the opposite side of Indian river from the great wealth producing streams of the Klondike district, is showing up well and may be the opening up of an entirely new gold area. Considerable work is now being done and the men are feeling quite sanguine over the results. On No. 12 a hole has been sunk in the gravel to a point believed to be two or three feet from bedrock. The gentlemen doing the work claim \$1 to the pan and four feet of pay gravel. In another hole on the same claim there is a vein of gravel and from 10c to \$1 and \$5 to the pan. On No. 19 a hole has been sunk about 31 feet. Alexander and Max are encouraged from the taking out of a boulder as large as the hand which had six large colors clinging to it.

This is about the first good work being done on the creek and the prospectors have encouraged a number of owners to get supplies over there and go to work in earnest. Within a few weeks more will be known of the stream. Sulphur creek is also showing much activity. Work is being diligently performed as far as 124 below discovery. The benches are declared to be as strong exactly the same formation as the now famous French gulch and the best holes have been started within a week. On No. 81 the men are showing some of the gold they claim to have taken out from there. On No. 62 they are claiming 50c. to the pan. On No. 46 below the owners are giving out the information that they get as much as \$5.00 to the pan on bedrock.

## OUTSIDE BREVITIES.

Capt. Hodgson, who commanded the McCulloch during the Manila engagement has returned to San Francisco. The number of prisoners turned over to Gen. Shafter after the surrender of Santiago de Cuba amounted to nearly 23,000 men. The prisoners are far in excess of Shafter's army.

The Washington troops that have been stationed at Vancouver were recently ordered to report at San Francisco, their ultimate destination probably being Manila. The boys are much pleased at the prospect of seeing active service.

The German residents of New York city are preparing to prove their loyalty to the United States in a very substantial manner. A large subscription is being raised among them and when a sufficient sum has been realized they intend constructing and equipping a battleship to be presented to the United States government.

The capture of Santiago de Cuba means a stimulus to the iron trade. A great quantity of Bessemer ore is mined at Santiago, and from 30,000 to 40,000 tons have been exported monthly to the United States in the past. Work was stopped by the officials and by this action thousands of men were thrown out of employment. Now that the Americans are in possession work will be resumed and the entire product will, doubtless, be exported to the United States.

A telegram dated Ottawa July 9 reads as follows: The council for the Yukon, in accordance with last session's act of parliament, has been appointed by the Dominion government, as follows: Commissioner, William Ogilvie; members of the council, Judge McGuire, F. C. Wade, Lieut. Col. Steele and Joseph E. Girouard. M. P. Mr. Ogilvie will leave next week and relieve Major Walsh, who is now acting commissioner. Girouard will go with him. The others are on the ground.

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