

to be the length of gulch-claims on our Pacific coast, and it has the advantage of giving claims to a larger number of adventurers, although, as a matter of fact, the consolidation of such claims is necessary to their advantageous development.

Fees and Royalties.—There can be no doubt, however, that the entry fee of \$15 for the first year, and of \$100 for each following year, in addition to the royalty of ten per cent. and upwards upon the product of each claim, is a very severe requirement, especially when the small size of the claims is considered. I admit freely that the Government of the Dominion has a perfect right to make whatever terms it chooses in this matter, and I confess that this case differs widely from that of our Pacific coast, where the liberal terms granted to mining have made ample returns in the establishment of permanently prosperous communities, in many of which mining is now a subordinate industry. The Klondike settlers do not go to stay. Their purpose is to rob the region of its treasure, and then go home again, leaving it uninhabited as they found it. The government would therefore reap nothing from its liberality if it should give away, free of royalty, the gold in its Arctic lands. A reasonable revenue, covering the cost of the administration of justice, order and civilized organization, and even furnishing something to the Treasury besides, may well be required of this new and destructive industry. But the exactions of these regulations are not reasonable. The requirement of \$100 per annum anyhow is unwise and unfair. If a miner succeeds in extracting gold from his claim, the royalty he pays should be satisfactory to the government; if he does not succeed at first, why should the government discourage him from persevering? Its interest is that he shall go on and test his ground thoroughly. Its policy should be to encourage prospecting and tax the proceeds, not the endeavor.

Not only are the fees and royalties too large, but they are unnecessarily multitudinous. Permits for this and that privilege, which might well be included in the very expensive privilege of mining at all, require separate applications and fees, until the whole thing reminds one of a high-priced boarding school, where music and dancing and a pew in church are, nevertheless, "extras."

It would certainly be difficult to enforce these regulations, and it is possible that all the revenue derived under them would be required to administer them, so that the government might find that it would have been better off if it had encouraged, instead of oppressing, the mining communities. The fable of the goose that laid the daily golden egg would be quite in point here; only I hardly think this particular goose is as permanently valuable as its classic prototype. The virgin riches of the Yukon territory are not going to last forever, or even very long. There is nothing new under the sun. We have seen plenty of these placer-mining rushes: and the Klondike will prove like the rest. There will be large returns in some places and to some men, and sore disappointment to thousands; and after awhile there will be a sickly, waning activity, needing every encouragement, and not able to bear heavy taxation. The worst thing that can be done is to force the working of the richest ground and the abandonment of the rest.

As I write, I hear a rumor that the Dominion government has been induced to reconsider these regulations, and that more lenient ones will be substituted. I trust this is true, and that in the new scheme the entry fee will be small, and the annual payment, irrespective of product, will be omitted altogether.

I cannot close without recognizing the characteristic liberality of these regulations in one respect, namely, the total absence of discrimination against aliens, who are treated exactly like native citizens. If the American miners who are crowding to the new Eldorado were compelled to forswear their allegiance to the United States on a condition

of holding mining claims, they would suffer what our foolish patriotism has inflicted upon foreigners for many years past. It is a silly measure, and more annoying than effective.

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R. W. RAYMOND.

Since the above was written, a copy of the amended regulations was forwarded to Dr. Raymond, who writes: "The changes you mention leave the system still objectionable, in my judgment. And the reservation of alternate claims, which I did not mention in my article, is a measure of doubtful expediency—though I will not absolutely condemn it without knowing more of the facts. If they are promptly sold at auction by the government, that may prove to be the fairest way to handle them; but for the government to hold onto them and not have them worked, would, I think, be unfortunate."

We may have something further to say on these regulations in our next number.

The Yukon District.

More than ten years ago, when placer gold mining along the tributaries of the Yukon in Canadian territory began to attract some attention, the Government decided that it was advisable to ascertain what importance might attach to this mining, and approximately where the 141st meridian, constituting the boundary between Canada and Alaska ran through the territory. The writer was entrusted with the charge of an exploring expedition to the region, and after obtaining all possible data from the few persons who had already visited some parts of it, the Yukon expedition left Ottawa early in the spring of 1887. Mr. W. Ogilvie was associated with the expedition and was particularly charged with the determination of the boundary line.

Many years before, the Hudson Bay Company had explored certain routes through this northern country lying west of the main Rocky Mountain range, and had established fur trading posts there. The history of these explorations now reads like a romance, in which the chief figure is the late Mr. Robert Campbell, who, up to the time of his death maintained the greatest interest in the further exploration of the region, and in correspondence with the writer afforded information which very materially assisted in enabling the exploration of 1887 to be carried to a successful issue.

The extension of the fur trade and the discovery of routes by which the supplies necessary for this purpose could be maintained, were the main objects of the early explorers, though some of them, like Campbell, kept careful diaries and journals, and furnished valuable contributions to general geographical knowledge. They did not discover the golden sands over which they were drifting along these great rivers, nor did they even know, until 1850, that the Pelly, the Lewes and the Yukon were continuous with the Kwitchee of the Russian fur traders on the coast. In 1852 the first-discovered routes across the upper Yukon basin were abandoned by the Hudson Bay Company in favor of that by the Porcupine River, and because of changes in the course of trade, and for many years the Lewes, the Pelly and their numerous tributaries appear to have remained unvisited by whites.

The history of the exploration of the Yukon district must, however, be told elsewhere. In 1880 some prospectors began the search for gold, and in the summer of 1887 there was about 250 miners in the region, most of them, at that time, being at Forty-mile Creek, where "heavy gold" had just been discovered.

In my report on the exploration of that year the general features of gold mining were thus summarized:—

"Forty-mile Creek is what the miners term a 'bed-rock creek' i.e., one in which there is no great depth of drift or detrital deposits